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ABSTRACT

In each of 3 years, 20 City College of New York undergraduates from New York City public inner city school backgrounds read to and mentored individual second graders in a Harlem public school in a program supported by the Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). Supporting academic experience aimed to improve the undergraduates' literacy, acquaintance with the classics, interest in independent study in related fields, and long-term interest in community service. Measures of change in grade point average, course selection and career choice suggest program success. At the elementary school, the program dramatically improved reading scores and motivated participating children even 3 years later. A lending library was also established at the school, and other services were provided that linked the elementary school and the college in a fruitful partnership. Six appendixes present a press release, reports on the program by some participants, and a bibliography of children's literature for the project. (Author/SLD)

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FIPSE City College Project

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on behalf of The City College
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New York, NY 10003

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Project Director:

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Year 3 \$89,213
Total \$217,562

In each of three years, 20 "average" City College undergraduates (from New York City public school/inner city backgrounds) read to and mentored individual second-graders in a Harlem public school. Supporting academic experience aimed to improve the undergraduates' literacy, acquaintance with classics, interest in independent study in related fields and long-term interest in community service. Measures of change in GPA, course selection and career choice suggest success. At the elementary school, the program dramatically improved reading scores and motivated participating children even three years later. We established a lending-library at the school and provided other services linking the elementary school and college in a fruitful partnership.

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Newspaper articles (Appendix A) on the project appeared in The Amsterdam News, The New York Voice and the City College Alumni Magazine.

Executive Summary

A. Project Overview

Students apply for a salaried position as research assistant in October. They are self-selected for interest, and then screened for responsibility and apparent ability to relate to children. Most are minority students with low B average. In November they are trained. In January each is assigned one or two second-grade students in each of two classes in P. S. 92 in Harlem. Students meet the children of each class twice a week in the spring and once a week in the fall, splitting each 45-minute session between interactive read-aloud and an activity like art or educational games. We serve about 20 college and 50 elementary-school students per year.

The college students are closely supervised by a faculty member from cognitive psychology, elementary education, and English literature. The students maintain a weekly journal, reviewed by the faculty for writing and content. There are also weekly seminars, meetings as a group with all three faculty.

There are three outcomes targets: college-community relations, schoolchildren, and college student. When we entered the school, City College was considered "that place on the hill," but as we leave, it is a part of its community, four blocks away. Children made frequent field trips to the college, P. S. 92 was the first Harlem school to participate in the annual CCNY-sponsored Citywide poetry contest, parents of schoolchildren matriculated in our GED program, other schools requested mentors from us, we organized a penpal exchange between two Harlem public schools, we catalyzed an annual bookfair at P. S. 92, and we set up an on-line circulating library at the school. As the program ends we are "partners." P. S. 92 teachers, children, and administration are expressing difficulty coping with our exit.

Effects on the children were assessed in three ways: change in standardized reading scores, individual observation, and long-term memory of the program. (Due to the school's moving children in and out of our program, we did not have a consistent control group.) The first year we compared the second-graders' reading scores to those of the second-graders of the previous year with the same teacher and found no difference. In the last year, however, when participants in our program over all three years comprised more than 25% of the school, the school's reading scores had improved enough to be removed from the city's "critical list." The school attributes this in large part to our program. Finally, in the third year we convened focus groups of alumni of the first year. Children were very detailed in their recall of the program, sharing that "it was the only time they had enjoyed school," and claiming an abiding love for reading, interest in attending (City) college and in becoming mentors.

College students too benefited from the program. We had anticipated a change in writing ability because of the journal critique, which did not occur measurably. We did find a significantly greater than normal proportion of students taking

advanced or independent study courses. According to the students' self-report and the career choices of the first-year participants (who have graduated) a great proportion committed to community service, working with children, and/or education careers. The students' progress reports thank us for: the program, insights from the seminar, and opportunities the program afforded. First-year participants improved on average .14 in GPA from before the program to after until graduation. We could not target a control group to assess the size increase to expect.

B. Purpose

CCNY is a commuter school of largely public-school educated minority students, many from the inner city. Our students are bright and motivated to succeed, but are not motivated to learn for its intrinsic rewards, nor do they take good advantage of college opportunities. Many students are not fully skilled in standard English or in the lore of (Western) culture presumed in college-level readings. The purpose of helping the disadvantaged children of their community was expected to unite the participants into a peer-group community, and to stimulate remedial work (reading good children's literature) for non-remedial reasons, with no loss of self-esteem. Finally, we expected that the individual faculty attention and need to "research" particular areas for particular children would motivate the students to do advanced work, try independent study, etc., which typically our students eschew.

C. Background and Origins

CCNY is an excellent public college, part of an excellent public university with strong record of achievement. Our project developed during a period of enormous budget cuts and an increasing push to large classes, at both CCNY and P. S. 92. Nevertheless, in the first year of the project CCNY administration committed resources to training students to set up the library at P. S. 92. We also received additional funding for subsidiary projects like the library from private foundations and businesses in the community. Students assisted in obtaining such funding, getting training in important entrepreneurial skills.

We had planned to administer the program after-school, at the college, in individual quiet rooms. We were advised by P. S. 92 that there could be problems arranging for pick-up of the children, and following their advice, executed the program during school hours at P. S. 92. Consequently, reading-in-pairs took place en masse in one or two large, noisy classrooms. College students complained of time lost as teachers settled their classes, read rules to the college students, or punished children by not letting them participate. Teachers sometimes perverted program objectives, asking the students to tutor or do phonetic exercises rather than reading with the children. On the plus side, being in the school, with its flaws, motivated many of the college students to become involved in improving education policies.

Project Description

The project centers on 1 1/2 hour sessions at P. S. 92, two the first semester, and one the second semester. Students freely designed these sessions around the children's needs and their own creative interests, urged to involve the children in ever more complex narrative. Many students also made extracurricular cultural fieldtrips. Their interactions were topics of discussion in two-hour weekly seminars, featuring peer-group decisions and suggestions. The first-year saw development of sub-groups of mentors, around a particular interest: finding children's books, dealing with special needs children, developing a penpal/writing program, and evaluating the program and obtaining funding for its extensions. Each faculty member supervised a work-group for about one-hour a week. Each professor also met individually with about four students per week for about 30 minutes. The extensive effort of a very dedicated faculty able to work individually with increasingly motivated students underlies any success.

Evaluation/Project Results

Our most compelling results are descriptive: P. S. 92 had no library, but now does; it was ranked among the poorest schools, but with a large proportion of alumni of our program it is no longer; with our help, three parents have returned for GEDs. Formal descriptive long-term follow-up (to continue after the project) will record mentors who pursue graduate work or careers with children, literacy, education, or community service. Transcripts of each participant upon graduation, allow tabulation of research-type courses and relative GPA before and after the program. Finally, we tabulate from their journals mentions of new academic experience, say of classic literature.

The schoolchildren constitute a fluid population: About 1/3 move from or into P. S. 92 during the schoolyear. Those who leave are lost to follow-up. We have interviewed the residual students of our first year (now in fourth-grade) and are content-analyzing those interviews. Since we no longer have a formal presence in the school, it is not clear whether we will do this again.

We are also experimentally trying to assess changes in the college students' writing and the schoolchildren's reading skills. Early and late journal entries are rated on a number of scales by a "blind" rater. (Such assessment, comparing application letter and progress report the first year yielded no difference and unreliable grading, so our design changed.) This year's second-graders were asked to paraphrase a book read aloud to them, and the quality of their paraphrase is being compared to nonparticipants' paraphrases in the other second-grade. We are recording new paraphrases in any student still at the school who we tested earlier, to see if there is continued growth and possible differences between participants and non-participants. These analyses we expect to complete by the end of the summer.

With these "hard" data we plan to publish with the student-researchers in professional journals. We have reported our work in the elementary school in the press (copies in Appendix A).

Body of Report

Project Overview

City College is a public, urban, commuter college of outstanding caliber. The undergraduate population is 80% minority, drawn largely from the Harlem community surrounding the college. City College undergraduates suffer from many of the problems typical of the public, urban, commuter student: nonstandard English skills, disaffection from the academic community, pursuit of a degree rather than an education, etc. At the same time, the students are creative, intelligent, and motivated to help their community in what they see are its major problems.

The project was designed to use this motivation to "sneak" in "remedial" English training and interest in education for itself. "Average" students were told that they had special skills in serving the Harlem community and were employed as research/teaching assistants in a Harlem elementary school, reading to second-semester second-graders through their first semester in third grade. With encouragement from an interdisciplinary faculty, they needed to: discover classic children's literature (like Greek mythology -- improving their basic college preparatory knowledge), consider what makes a book good (the stuff of literature courses), research how to reach and teach children who may be emotionally scarred and detached from school concerns, research how reading is learned (the stuff of education and cognitive psychology courses) and research how to assess the effectiveness of the program (the stuff of experimental psychology). Students organized into peer groups centered around their own interests as they arose from problems or questions relating to their interactions with the children. We presume that this increased the motivation to learn, and established a strong academic community among the participants.

Students also kept a journal of observations, which was critiqued both for content and writing. We intended that the practice with good standard-English appropriate for third-to-fifth-grade children's literature and the practice writing, not for remediation purposes, but for communication and teaching purposes, would improve standard English skills.

At the same time, we expected to affect the schoolchildren positively, as they met over the calendar year, one-on-one with a caring college student role-model from similar ethnic and socioeconomic circumstances. We also found ourselves increasingly involved in aiding the school and community, increasingly called upon by the school administrators and other schools to do so.

The outcomes assessments are still underway, and suggest success in many of our goals. We have no clear indication that college student writing or reading improved, but we know from journal entries that many of our students were exposed to much "basic" literature -- the story of Pandora, Aesop's fables, the pleasure of poetry -- for the first time. We also know that a sizeable proportion of our students decided to take advanced courses like independent study in psychology of language,

creative writing, or to switch to education or add an education minor after participating. The first year participants, the only group to have mostly graduated as yet, jumped on average .14 on their GPAs after participating. Finally, we know that several alumni of our program have gone on in related fields, some organizing mentorship programs of their own. They attribute their decisions and enthusiasm to their experience in our program.

Measures of the children's progress include the impressions of the effectiveness of our program by the school administration, the impact of the program on the children's attitudes during active mentorship and two years after it ended (for the first-year's participants), and general changes in achievement. Probably the most compelling of these is that for a number of years prior to our entry in the school, it had been "listed" for takeover by the city because of low-reading scores (A SURR School -- School Under Required Review, ranked 616 out of 621 in reading scores). In our last year, when our children were in second, third, and fourth grades -- 25 - 33% of the school's population -- the school was delisted... because of improvement in reading scores. The administration attributes this in no small measure to our presence.

The administration's regard for our program is seen in their actively seeking additional mentors for "special needs children" and in their motivating other schools in the district in trying to get CCNY students similarly involved.

We have evidence of the children's positive impressions of the program from the college students' journals. There are frequent mentions of expressions of joy from the children at the mentors' coming, or anger and frustration at an occasional absence. More rigorously, we conducted focus group interviews of the fourth-graders who had participated in the program in second-grade, and found detailed recall of ordinary reading sessions and extraordinary parties or fieldtrips, and consensus that when the mentors came "was the only time school was fun." The children also expressed interest in attending City College and in becoming mentors one day themselves.

Lastly, our program developed sidelines in ways helpful to the community at large and to improving town-gown relations. Three parents of children in the program returned to school, having sought advice from the mentors. Each year we held a coat drive for needy children in the school. Discovering that the school did not have a lending library, we secured funds to create an on-line circulation system, with a cadre of mentors organizing the existing books, entering the books into the catalogue and disseminating use of the system. Part of fund-raising and raising literacy consciousness included our sponsoring the first annual book fair at P. S. 92, for which P. S. 92 took the helm in subsequent years, asking us for assistance in staffing the fair's workshops. City College mentors also organized an annual Halloween party at the College for the children, and a pen-pal program with another Harlem public school. (With the first-hand experience, this school too sought CCNY mentors.) Our first year,

P. S. 92 became the first Harlem school to participate in the CCNY annual citywide poetry festival, which continued in subsequent years. When we entered P. S. 92, the principal told us the community suspiciously considered City College "that place on the hill." As we leave, we are part of this community, which is, after all, only four blocks away.

Purpose

In our application to FIPSE four years ago, we stated:

"This project intends to

- improve college students' English skills
- integrate readings and skills from the natural sciences, humanities, and applied studies toward a single purpose
- engage students in academic issues and readings through preexisting interest in community problems
- encourage select minority students to pursue graduate education and academic careers
- employ college students on academic work within the college, thereby increasing their involvement with the college community
- use college students as models for community children
- foster appreciation of reading and education in community children."

As the project developed, purposes were added. With respect to the college students, our close work with them on the project revealed a lack of basic "entrepreneurial skills." By this I mean, simple things like how to gain admission to a museum (do you have to pay the suggested donation?) or how to arrange for a class trip to a cultural site, to advanced, but necessary skills, like how to request a letter of recommendation or effectively apply for graduate work, or how to network, write small proposals, etc. Teaching this and having the students themselves arrange for the program's activities became a goal. Much of the time, this goal was achieved through implementation of the students' own ideas, developing an implementation plan for them. (I believe our success in teaching these skills, indeed in recognizing that they needed to be taught, resulted from the small student-faculty ratio and degree of commitment of the faculty, and also from the fact that students and faculty constituted teams working toward a mutual end, rather than the typical directive and distancing classroom situation.)

With respect to the schoolchildren, school, and community, our close work, but as outsiders, revealed glaring needs, which we attempted to fill. Many of the children were poorly dressed, described experiences of losing their homes, or in other ways reflected their poverty. A purpose became to make up in small ways for the effects of poverty and to improve the children's self-esteem. We also noted that the school did not have a lending

library; in fact, that the children do not have much access to books, with texts not going home either. A major undertaking was creating a library for the school (and teaching the college students the requisite skills to do so) and increasing community involvement in literacy.

My understanding of the original problems and purposes has not changed. I do not think the model was successful in addressing all of its original purposes, however, and will discuss this with results.

Background and Origins

The key elements of the project in terms of setting were: (1) attracting student assistants to be paid \$1680 for the year (at about \$6 per hour) to work with the children, (2) creating an interdisciplinary participating faculty able to devote considerable time to mentoring the students, and (3) arranging for the students to meet with the schoolchildren for three hours per week. We anticipated a very positive response to the wage because: opportunity to work on campus is limited, this is the wage NIH pays for research assistants (at private universities where wage expectations might be higher), and there had just been a tuition increase accompanied by cutting of student assistance and entry-level jobs in the community. To our surprise we had only about 30 applicants each year. Many of them confessed that the wage was both minimal and of minimal interest; some wrote later that it "barely covered their carfare"; one left the program and school because her job at UPS paid very well and they wanted her to work more hours for a promotion. We had also expected that making this a paid position would cause the students to see it as more relevant and accord it a higher priority than they often do their schoolwork. This too did not seem to have worked. I still feel strongly that students, especially from the lower socioeconomic classes, should be paid for valued work, but I also do not feel that the pay worked as incentive.

The participating faculty consisted of a (Black male) full professor of elementary education, a (White female) full professor of psychology (the PI), and an (White female) adjunct professor of English -- creative writing and children's literature. The atmosphere was dynamic, both because of the range of relevant interests and distribution of expertises, and because of the race-gender mix. We met as a group in seminar, often agreeing, but also often deferring to one another or arguing from our different vantage points. I think that seeing there was neither an absolute authority, nor a single correct answer as far as the faculty was concerned, allowed the students to feel more freedom in expressing their own opinions and in recognizing that there are indeed grey areas. While this is a desired outcome in all college courses, I do not find that it materializes often with these students, who in their traditional, overcrowded education, have neither been encouraged to assert their opinions nor to search for questions rather than answers.

The faculty also openly consulted one another on "multicultural" issues, which arose frequently, either with respect to current events being discussed with the children, or with respect to confrontations that arose between the children. For example, we had a rousing discussion of Huckleberry Finn and the pros and cons of discussing slavery with the children (Disney had released the movie one year; many mentors were activists with regard to Black consciousness). We also confronted the Rainbow curriculum and introducing books about nontraditional (gay) families. Every year we faced a Black child not wanting to play with another, darker-skinned or Hispanic child, or wanting a different mentor to match race or cultural expectations. We, the faculty, privately discussed how these class-discussions were the first time any of us had experienced such open dialogue across race-gender lines (despite many attempts at sensitivity training sessions, etc.). For me it was invaluable; I believe it was a truly valuable experience for the students as well, which many mentioned in their progress reports. (Some students, however, described the discussions as irrelevant to their work with the children.) I would strongly recommend retaining the interdisciplinary, diverse faculty feature. Of course, one problem as our college budget is being squeezed is to permit such an abundance of faculty resource in one program.

Our initial plan had been that the schoolchildren come to the College after school to work with the mentors. There were several anticipated plusses to this arrangement: we had secured private "cubicles" for pairs to read surrounding a central room for games and congregating; this would be an extension and addition to the children's normal curriculum; the children would become familiar with the College as would their parents when they came for pick-up; and we would be autonomous of the school. We were advised by the school that this was inadvisable, because we would have problems with parents arriving on time to pick up the children at a new location. We were told that a proportion of parents were chronically late and/or did not show, and that many would find the complication of a new place of pick-up some days of the week overwhelming. Given that the college students could not stay around indefinitely with a child whose caretaker had not arrived, nor could they take the children home, we capitulated. Consequently, the program took place at the public school, during school hours.

There were mostly downsides to this. The school had no spare space, so "private" readings took place in the classrooms with 10-20 mentor-child pairs working together. This was loud and the children were often distracted by activities or the presence of friends in another group. It also meant that we were "guests" of the teachers, who sometimes assisted, but more often hindered, the program. Teachers were very concerned that the children "settle" as a group (7- and 8-year olds returning from lunch excited about upcoming activities do not "settle" easily), before releasing them to the mentors, wasting time. Teachers sometimes wanted the mentors to continue classroom exercises, rather than

read with the children. And the teachers sometimes punished the children by not permitting them to participate. As guests in the school, we needed to recognize the teachers' authority, while preserving the integrity of the program. This occasioned important discussions for the college students about how to handle such situations diplomatically, but detracted from our academic goals for both the college students and the children.

Locating the program in the school also constrained the design. We intended to work with the same children for one year, and to leave other second-graders unmentored, as controls. The school found our program to be valuable, and sometimes moved into it children whom they thought would especially benefit, and sometimes moved children out, whom they felt had progressed enough to benefit more from regular classroom instruction, especially as CityWide test time approached. Not only do we disagree with this pedagogically, but it was frustrating to the college student mentors who had developed a relationship with a child, only to have it cut short. Too, it muddled our evaluation procedures.

On the upside, our active presence in the school caused us to see and the school to recognize needs (like the library), bad educational practices, and political considerations like resource allocations, which stimulated important discussions in seminar, and aroused some student activism on behalf of education. Also, it gave us the chance to teach our students how to deal with such frustrations gracefully and professionally.

The last context effect to mention applies to both the college and elementary school children. This is a fluid community. Despite careful selection and responsible attitudes, about 12% (7 out of 55 across the three years) of the college students withdrew (from the program and/or school altogether), because of financial or family pressures. More than 1/3 of the children each year moved... in or out of elementary school during the school year, not just between terms. Families would lose housing and move in with relatives in another district; children would be re-assigned to schools geared to a particular disability; families would move out-of-town or out-of-state. The fluidity of the classes makes teaching difficult, since the teacher cannot build confidently on previous lessons. It also complicates evaluation procedures, since some children did not fully experience the program, and some "veterans" are forever lost to follow-up.

Project Description

College students were recruited through posted advertisements and classroom announcements in October. They were required to submit a transcript and letter of application, detailing their skills and interest in the program. They were interviewed and selected during the month of October on a first-come first-serve basis, and participated in three training sessions in November. Toward the end of intersession, in late January, we entered the school with a welcoming party in the

classrooms, and the students were assigned their individual charges the following week. For the spring term, they visited the school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for 1 1/2 hour sessions, 45 minutes in each of two classes. We ended the spring term with a party in the classes before finals in May and distributed self-addressed postcards for the children to keep in touch with the mentors over the summer. Many mentors volunteered in the school over June. In September, the mentors assisted the school administration in preparing the school for opening the week before Labor Day, and entered the school the following week, on Wednesdays only (1 1/2 hour sessions again split between the two classes) for the fall semester. We ended before finals in December, with a party and a final parting gift.

College students met on Tuesday afternoons in a three-credit seminar, as a group, with all three faculty members. The students were also required to keep a regular journal of goals for, and observations of, the children. Journals were submitted to a faculty member about every 10 days, and individual appointments were scheduled to discuss the sessions and the journals. At the beginning of the first semester and the end of both semesters students were videotaped reading with their children, and the videotapes were also reviewed by the faculty. Finally, at the end of the program students were required to submit with their journals a progress report reflecting on their year in the program, changes it inspired in them or their goals, changes they saw in the children and the school, and criticisms of the program and particular events.

During the first year, students petitioned to add meetings on particular issues or new activities. Consequently, we developed faculty-supervised subgroups in: book selection (finding, cataloguing, abstracting and discussing good children's books), working with special-needs children (often discipline problems arising from depression or issues related to poverty), minority attitudes to establishment schooling, applying for funds to extend program activities, establishing a library at the school, assessing the program's effects on the children's literacy, developing a pen-pal program with another school, and researching cultural activities to share with the children. The last two of these were student-organized and student-administered; the others had a faculty advisor as well. We continued the groups in subsequent years, although topics changed depending on student interest. These were very dynamic "learner-centered" experiences.

We intended to compare the application essay and progress report for changes in writing. It turned out that the essays were too different in form and content to evaluate them blindly. We are in the process of performing such a comparison between an early (second week in February) and late (second week in November) journal entry. The journal entries are also (informally) content-analyzed, with regard to: mentions of new experiences the college students have, criticisms of the school or program, mentions of change interest or ability in reading on

the part of the children, mentions of affiliation of the children to the mentors, mentions of changes in self-esteem that the children indicate, activities the mentors engage in with the children, and mentions of special circumstances like a child being hurt, a mentor visiting the child's home, etc. Similar observations are noted from the progress reports.

Evaluation / Project Results

School-Community Development

Assessments of changes in the school or community which resulted from our program were gleaned either from specific mention in the journals, or from the project's direct implementation of a change. What I am reporting here is more likely to be an underestimate than an overestimate of such changes, since it relies on the students recognizing and recording such changes, with no way of assessing omissions. I emphasize that a college-student executed idea is a result, and an important one, both for the actual impact of the idea, and for the fact that its adoption and execution entails the learning of significant skills and attainment of self-esteem an empowerment. Realize that the results enumerated here are not statistical; they are categorical changes, like "peace" where there was war is a categorical change. Table 1 lists these changes, indexed as to whether they were one-time or sustained, how many college students participated, and whether or not the activity was requested by the school. I take the school's request as an indication of their positive evaluation of our performance, as our being (perhaps uniquely) able to answer their needs. These results are discussed in detail below.

Activity	# Years	Sustained	School Request?	#College Students
<i>Library</i>	3	YES	NO	10
<i>Book Fair</i>	2	YES	2nd Year	c. 15
<i>Pen-Pal Program</i>	2	NO	NO	4
<i>Special Tutoring</i>	3	YES	YES	c. 5
<i>Clothing Drive</i>	3	NO	YES	c. 10
<i>Aspira Club Party</i>	3	NO	NO	5
<i>Parent's Return to School</i>	1	NO?	NO	3
<i>Field Trips</i>	3	NO	SOME	15-20

TABLE 1: Events that would not have taken place without the program. These were either initiated by the students or requested

by P. S. 92. In some instances programs were sustained after we officially left the school. 57 college students participated in the three years of the program; the number across years involved in each activity is also indicated.

Community Literacy

At the beginning of the program's second semester, a discussion emerged in seminar concerning whether the school had a library. There was a room designated "library," with a dusty, unorganized collection of books; the books did not circulate, nor had they in the memory of anyone at the school. In addition, we learned that school texts did not go home, there are virtually no bookstores in that area of Harlem, and many of the children did not have library cards for the public library. In short "Johnny can't read" because "Johnny has no books."

As a group, we planned a three-pronged attack on this problem: providing the children with public library cards (college-student initiated and implemented), organizing a book fair and book-donation program at the school (college student implemented), and creating a lending-library at the school (college-student implemented).

The first year, one student had ascertained that the children did not have library cards, and called the public library to organize a field trip for both classes to the facility. This entailed organization with the principal and teachers, and providing permission slips to the parents. The field trip took place. Subsequent years, we mentioned the trip to the college students, and some took their children individually, but a group trip never occurred again. This is but one instance of follow-through only on a self-conceived idea.

The book fair was a suggestion of the PI, and we oversaw it the first year; the second year happily P. S. 92 took over and organized it, asking us for assistance. The book fair entailed contacting book-fair companies and hiring one, contacting publishers and bookstores for donations, contacting food distributors for donations, and then advertising, setting up, and manning the fair. Two students undertook writing to publishers: We received book donations from Barnes and Noble, Scholastic and Magination Press, having contacted 10 presses. We also received a permanent loan from the New York Public Library, after writing a small proposal and being site-visited. I also contacted Ben and Jerry's, and received an ice cream donation for the fair. Following that lead, another student approached MacDonald's of Harlem and received a donation of cookies, cassette tapes on Black History (a former promotional item), and fruit punch. She also developed the idea of using the donated books and tapes as a buy-one get-one free incentive for the fair.

In a group of 18 students, four students (GPAs less than 3.0) assumed executive roles in organizing and raising funds for the fair. College students also ran workshops at the bookfair, to make it a worthwhile community event. Workshops ranged from arts and crafts, to poetry reading and history (Langston Hughes and

Harlem), to meditation/relaxation techniques. More than half the students participated. The fair was successful, raising over \$1000 for the library the first year, and providing the children with books. We also feel that the event itself raises literacy consciousness in the community, and improves school-community relations, with families participating in a "fun" social event at their children's school on a weekend. Evidently, the school too felt that it had important consequences, since they initiated a fair the following year and requested help from the (new) college students in fund/book - raising and running workshops. The school conferred the label "P. S. 92 - CCNY Partnership" as the sponsor of the book fair.

Lastly and most importantly, the school now has a lending library. The PI, assisted by two students interested in learning proposal writing, received a \$3500 grant from Smith-Barney's Traveller's Corporation to buy software and supplies and to pay college students to resuscitate the library. We also received a small grant from MicroCat Corporation, the providers of our software, of a "teaching" software package to begin work before we had gotten other funding. CCNY's Division of Social Science also provided some funding for students to organize the library. P. S. 92 initially provided two teacher/trainers who oversaw college students, instructing them on how to weed and organize a collection. After we had purchased the software for creating an on-line circulation system, a computer-specialist from IBM, working on another project at the school, supervised the students in setting up the on-line catalogue. With this as seed, P. S. 92 independently applied for funds from the Board of Education for a part-time librarian and additional books. One year after we began, classes were being held in a warm and welcoming library; 1 1/2 years after we began, books circulated home; by the beginning of the next schoolyear (2 1/2 years after we began), books will be checked out by light-pen and bar-code and children will be able to search the library collection by computer.

Virtually all of the weeding, organizing, and inputting to the computer have been performed by CCNY students -- about 10 participating over the three years. As I will note again below, one of these students is now a librarian in a Manhattan Public Library, being sent at their expense to library school. Her dream is to run her own children's room at her library, integrating a number of satisfying experiences from our program.

One other program extension developed community literacy and strengthened relations within the community. At the end of the first year, two mentors got the idea to promote children's writing through a pen-pal exchange program with another school. They selected a neighboring school, which was predominantly Hispanic (P. S. 92 is predominantly African-American), because it too was within walking distance from the college. They contacted the school's principal, explaining that they wanted to work with a third-grade class, to write letters to another third-grade class, which they would carry back and forth to save postage. The principal was enthusiastic, and the exchange began, and continued

through the next year with one of the pen-pal founders organizing a group of second-year mentors to work with the P. S. 92 children on their letters and to facilitate the exchange. The program did not continue in the third year when the founder left, another instance of follow-through primarily on self-initiated ideas. To our knowledge, no other bridges were built between the two elementary schools as a result of this one.

There are three results of interest here, besides the children's exchange of letters for more than a year. The first is that the principal of the new school quickly became enthusiastic about the mentors, giving the originator a bilingual class (he is Spanish-speaking, from the Dominican Republic) of his own to work with once a week. This is an independent evaluation of the valued impact of the college students in an elementary school. The second is that the program originator worked with me to record the impact of the pen-pal program. See Appendix B for two assessments that he wrote. It is clear that he absorbed some lessons about program construction and evaluation from this experience and his supervision. Finally, as he says in his assessments, he intended to become an elementary school teacher before the program, which strengthened this resolve. As of last month he had obtained his substitute teacher's license and was teaching in P. S. 92. He will be a fully certified teacher once he becomes a citizen.

Material Resources

Apart from ensuring that the children had books to read at home, the mentorship program provided other materials and was seen as a source for community improvement by the school. The 45 minute session which mentors had with children from each class was divided between reading and literacy activities. These activities included playing educational games like Scrabble, Jr., doing arts and crafts like creating a picture book for the story just read or creating a puppet show of the story, etc. In our first semester the teacher complained that we were using their supplies, and a quick poll revealed that most of the children had never owned their own box of crayons. As a program, we provided each child with a new box of 24 crayons and construction paper each year. Journal entries typically read like this one from the last year:

"Today I distributed the crayons and construction paper. Everyone went crazy, they couldn't believe I had something for them to keep. ... I really enjoyed issuing out the items to the children. What I enjoy extremely is the sincere happy look on their faces when you give them something."

Indeed, the first year, one of the children protested that he could not take them home for his mother would think he had stolen them, and despite the note the mentor enclosed, his mother did so think, and threw them out. (Those crayons were replaced, the mother contacted, and ultimately her relationship with the mentor resulted in her returning to school for her GED.) Not only were the children rarely in a position to get something new, but these

college students rarely are in positions of power to give such gifts. The quotation is from the journal of a mentor who lives in the projects. I believe it is empowering to give and must contribute to an increase in the mentors' self-esteem.

Perhaps because of donation of such (small) resources, the school saw us as resourceful, and turned to us in winter to arrange a coat drive. One of the faculty organized this with two or three students each year.

Finally, individual mentors noted and sometimes ameliorated specific needs in individual children. We recognized three cases of child abuse (which had in fact already been known to authorities). We were also informed by 2-3 children each year (out of 50-60 seen each year) of their moving into or from shelters, often following several weeks of journal observations by mentors of untidy dress or non-hygienic body conditions. One mentor discovered the cause of a child's limp was his shoe's nails protruding through his shoe; when binding the shoe and sending a note home did not result in its replacement the mentor considered buying some himself (I do not know the resolution of this). On a brighter note, one mentor noted exceptional performance in a child, and arranged to have her tested by the school, resulting in her being placed in a gifted-child program. And we noticed that one child needed glasses, and when it turned out she was too embarrassed to wear them, we arranged that all the mentors wearing contacts would wear glasses for the next two weeks, and her mentor brought in an activity book to make a beaded glasses chain. The consequence, from the mentor's progress report, "I swear, tears were filling my eyes seeing her wear her glasses with pride after."

Educational / Cultural Resources

Mentors also tried to improve the educational experiences of the children beyond the immediate goals of the program. Each year, with different groups of mentors, this took different shapes. As mentioned, the first year one of the mentors organized a class trip to the library for library cards. A group of four mentors that year also arranged a field trip for their children (about six children participated) to the Egyptian wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art over Spring Break. Other field trips arranged by small groups of mentors included a trip to the puppet theatre in Central Park, the Natural History Museum, and the Coney Island Aquarium.

The program as a whole arranged a final-trip the second year to the Egyptian wing for all the children. We also arranged each year a field trip to the College for the CityWide Poetry Festival. This was the first time that a Harlem school had participated in the event. Probably as a result of their experience with our students both as arrangers and chaperones, each year in June P. S. 92 has requested college student chaperones for field trips it arranges. As we have learned, one of the difficulties facing schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods is a parent body that has either no time or no interest in

working in the school for these extra duties.

The Poetry Festival was a success on many grounds, and we institutionalized it for the remaining years. The first year, the students arranged a tour of the college computer lab, writing center, and observatory. With different mentors, the second year, the children visited the college radio station, and three read their poems on the air. The third year we returned to the observatory, and with one mentor an anthropologist, added the anthropology lab and examination of bones and shards.

Students and faculty also arranged for some cultural assemblies at the school. The anthropologist organized a presentation by the group researching New York's African Burial Ground. The English professor arranged for two visits by children's book authors different years. One of the first-year student contacted a celebrity African-American policeman who gave a presentation to the sixth-graders in our second year.

Finally, one of our first-year's students was an officer in the Latino students club, the Aspira Club, which sponsored a Halloween party on campus for the children that year and the following year. Upon graduating from the program, he also organized the Aspira Club to develop its own mentorship program, so that the third-graders would continue to be served (see notice Appendix C).

Again, it is important to note that the result is not only that the event took place, but that the students themselves learned how to organize it, make the necessary contacts and arrangements, and see the activity through. In most cases, this involved learning how and whom to phone, and entailed research on a number of sites, before a final selection of a site was made. As is evident by the fact that good ideas were not always sustained once their originators had graduated, the best way to "teach" these organizational skills is to have the students implement their own ideas.

Apart from cultural enrichment, the students' presence was recognized by the school as vital, from the first semester. Students were asked to volunteer additional time as tutors, or to volunteer additional time with other students who were seen as having special needs, but were not in the program. I was also asked to find additional volunteers, because the school found the students to be so valuable as teachers' aids. I know of eight students who so volunteered their time -- four after their involvement in the program had ended, and two before being accepted into the program. The remaining two students had learned of the program, but either had applied too late or did not have enough time to devote, but so worked part-time in the school.

Each year about 20% of the mentors arranged to meet their children's families. The most impressive concrete consequence was one mentor's being asked to be godparent for the two children she mentored for a year, and a year following the program. Another consequence was the exchange of information about college, with the result the first year, of three parents returning to school for their GEDs or associate's degrees. This was not reported by

anyone in later years, but may have occurred without the mentor's knowledge (or the mentor's mentioning it).

Educational Impact on the Children

Reading Scores

Our intention had been to compare the average reading scores of the children in the program, before and after the program, with the average reading scores at the same ages of the children in the two second grades who had not participated in the program. This turned out to be impossible. First, there was considerable flux in the program participants, with children moving in and out of our "experimental group" during the first semester. When we returned from the summer, intending to follow those children who were still in the school, we learned that, not atypically, the four second grades had been shuffled to make four third grades, and some children had been retained in grade. Those of our children who were in the most advanced third-grade we were not allowed access to, and we were requested to take children new to the school or to the program to make up for the loss. The consequence was that there was only a small sample of children that had participated for the full-year or not at all.

We have nevertheless some measures of development, but they are not as tightly designed as had been our plan. At the end of our first semester, we compared the average reading scores on the CityWide reading test, of one class, with the average reading scores from the previous year of the children who had had the same teacher. The means were virtually identical: 24.5 (standard deviation = 19.4) and 25.3 (s.d.=18.4). The teacher, however, felt that the children had advanced in both skill and interest far beyond what she was accustomed to.

In support of her observation, we have the school's performance change as a whole this year. From before our entry into the school, the city had "listed" the school among the most poorly performing schools, "on probation" and slated for takeover if there was no improvement (SURR, School Under Required Review, in the bottom 10 schools in reading of the more than 600 in the City). This year P. S. 92 was delisted, according to the principal the only school to be delisted for academic (not bureaucratic) reasons. The administration, of course, had implemented many curricular changes but attributes the improvement in large part to our program. We should note that this year alumni of our program would have been in the third-to-fifth grades, substantial contributors to reading evaluations in a K-6 school.

Listening and Paraphrasing Skills

We have also attempted two formal assessments of how we are doing with the children. Last year a group of three mentors and I designed an assessment, which those mentors and seven others are implementing. We selected from among twelve books, seven children's stories, which were rated as equally interesting, age-appropriate, complex and deep by the college students as a whole.

For each book, we prepared a list of questions designed to elicit specifics of plot, character, and moral. Each participating mentor reads one of the books to a child and asks the child to paraphrase the book. Using the questions, the mentor then asks for specific information which the child may have omitted from the paraphrase. All the children in the program are tested (none by his/her own mentor), and 30 children from the non-participating classes are also tested, after a getting-acquainted session playing educational games. The test is being re-administered to the same children now (six-months later) to see if there are any differences between experimental and control children in rate of comprehension development.

The reading sessions and paraphrases are all tape-recorded. We intend to analyze the tapes with respect to the number of relevant (e.g., point of clarification) and irrelevant (e.g., request for a drink) interruptions during the reading, as a measure of attention to the story. We will also evaluate the first paraphrase with respect to the number of key elements (answers to the as-yet-unasked target questions) covered. Finally, we will count the number of specific questions that needed to be asked to elicit the complete paraphrase, and the proportion that were correctly answered. Given that listening to stories, answering questions about them, and developing retelling skills were key elements of our reading activities, we hope that this assessment will show: a) better performance of "our" children than the control children at both measurement periods, and b) more improvement between periods. We expect the analyses to be completed by the end of the summer. Indeed, a former mentor has asked to work on this as part of a graduate-school preparatory program she has been accepted to.

Focus Groups on Program Impact

Following the suggestion of FIPSE's Evaluation Specialist, we conducted focus-group interviews of the children from the first-year who were still at the school 2 1/2 years later, now leaving fourth grade. These children were divided into three groups of six or seven children each. Interviews were conducted by two current mentors and one of the mentors from the year the children had participated. Questions were designed to elicit specific memories of the program, speculation as to its intent, and comments as to their feelings of its worth. There were also questions aimed at assessing their attitude to reading and their current attitude toward school. We were gratified to find that all three groups remembered considerable details about the program, spontaneously mentioning the field trips to the college and the Halloween party for example, and likewise warmly remembered the program and their individual mentors for making school fun. We also found that while most of the children claimed to like reading, few could remember the last book they read and no one listed reading as an activity for a holiday or time they were allowed to stay up late. A rough transcription of one of the focus group interviews follows:

- E. What did you like about the program?
Ss. The way we read and stuff.
And ask questions.
We went on trips.
[Halloween party and end-of-semester party]
We went up to City College
[wore costumes, did the limbo...cake: Halloween]
- E. What didn't you like?
Ss. Nothing - liked everything
Didn't like walking up all the stairs at City College.
- E. Do you remember what you used to do everyday?
Ss. We used to go downstairs in the parents' room and read to our partners.
One of the mentors made a book about me. I liked that.
[All of the mentors are mentioned by name.]
- E. What did you like about your mentor?
Ss. She was funny.
We did penpals.
She liked to read.
- E. Would you like to be mentors.
Ss. YES! YES! YES!
E. Why?
Ss. Because of the way you express things.
Because you can teach them more.
I'd like to be reading to the students and take the letters to the penpals.
- E. Do your help your brothers and sisters read?
Ss. [All say yes].
- E. If you can stay up late, what do you usually do?
Ss. [Most say watch TV. One child says "read, do math, ride bike" and claims to have spent a whole day off doing math. Many add Nintendo, basketball, play.]
- E. What was the last book you read?
Ss. Robert Clemente -- he a basketball player.
In class -- a reader.
Otis.
Medusa.
Don't know.
- E. Do you read or play games when you go home?
Ss. My homework, then get ready for school.
[Chores, then play.]
- ...
- E. Why do you think the mentors came?
Ss. To help us improve in our reading better.
E. Did you improve?
Ss. Yes, I always improve.
- ...
- E. What do you all think about college?
Ss. [Everyone wants to go to college, but when pressed

explain because everybody else does. One child questions whether the work is the same in college as it is now. E replies that it is different, just like third grade is different from fourth grade. The children protest that it's not different; it's] the same work over and over again. I like school but it's boring. Because you can't get anywhere.

Another focus group ends with the wistful wish that the mentors would come back, since only then was school interesting.

Educational Changes in the College Students

Formal Measures: Change in GPA and Writing

Our original plan had been that changes in the college students' writing be assessed by having their application letters and progress reports be evaluated by graders blind to the program. We had expected that the two writing "assignments" would produce discussion of personal experiences relevant to reading to children and education and to career goals. This turned out not to be the case: The application essays, by and large, were very underdeveloped, with the consequence that the graders were comparing essays with very divergent content and organization. We tried this anyway, instructing two experienced English-composition teachers to evaluate each with respect to its purpose. The rating form and instructions constitute Appendix D. Each grader was given a batch of "anonymous" essays, with the same essays duplicated between the two graders for reliability checks. The graders negatively correlated with one another on the essays they graded in common. We changed the protocol, so that: 1) both writing samples are from the journal, one an entry from the week of February 14, and one an entry from the week of November 14, and 2) rather than experienced English teachers, the samples are being graded by a psychology graduate student with interest in language. The first change is to ensure similar themes for the two samples. The second change is designed to eliminate pre-existing bias as to what constitutes a good English composition, so that the form is used as intended.

The early and late essays have been typed similarly for all three years and are in the process of being evaluated. It is my impression (as the typist) that there will not be a demonstrable difference across students, although it is clear that some students changed considerably. Examples of an early (Feb.) and late (Nov.) entry for one mentor from the first year and one from the second are in Appendix E. One seems to have become more detailed, the other less, and both reflect errors in English mechanics at both periods.

A second formal assessment we have attempted is in change in GPA for program participants, comparing average GPA before they started the program with average GPA from program end until graduation. This has been completed only on the first year

participants, since the other years have not yet graduated. There are some caveats here as well. First, seven of the 18 participants transferred between 5 and 84 credits to CCNY from a junior college, so the grade comparison is between two institutions, and between for the most part general distribution-required courses and more advanced courses for the major requirements. Second, we have no comparison group, and I suspect that, though the courses get harder, there normally is some improvement in GPA as students progress through college.

Our intention had been to select 40 students from the applicants and randomly assign 20 of them to a control group, "wait-listed" in case someone left. We had too few applicants each year, and the 10 or so that we did not select, were not selected for a reason, and so are not an appropriate comparison group. We attempted to create a control group with the College Statistician by accessing students in the same range of credits and GPA in their admission year and looking at the distribution of GPA-change through graduation in samples of 20. Ultimately he decided it was impossible to access student records that way.

The data that we do have on the first year's participants only is displayed in Table 2: the range in number of credits prior to our program, the range in average GPA before and after our program, and the mean change in GPA for individual students consequent to the program. It can be seen that for the students there was improvement, although we do not know if this is greater improvement than is normal from sophomore to senior year.

Range in # Credits Pre	Mean Pre GPA Range	Mean Post GPA Range	Mean Change in GPA
17-105	2.0-3.4	1.7-3.5	+.14

Research Skills / Advanced Courses / Entrepreneurial Skills

A primary goal of the program was to interest the participating students in academics for its own sake, to develop an interest in independent study, research, and the more advanced specialty courses that each department offers but are rarely or never pursued by non-majors. While the mentors were participating we were aware of advanced work that they pursued with the participating faculty. With the first year class, we examined their transcripts for advanced courses prior to graduation. We intend to do so with the remaining years as they reach that point. Again we have no comparison group per se. However, in the seven years that I have been at CCNY no undergraduate had pursued independent study or research with me, and in Professor Laskin's experience at CCNY no non-English major had taken her advanced children's writing course. The psychology department, with about 300 majors, has eight per year doing honors (all selected from a pool of students with better than 3.0 average) and perhaps one pursuing non-clinical graduate work. So, for a cohort of 20 "average" students to have more than one doing advanced work of this nature likely is an improvement. Table 3 displays our total

N each year, the number taking children's writing, the number pursuing undergraduate research, and the number accepted into a Ph.D. pipeline or honors program.

Total N @ Year	# in Children's Writing	# on Research	# on Graduate Track
18	1	1	1
18	2	1	1
19	3	5	4

Career Moves

Another way we can assess the impact of the program is in students' choice of careers. We note that students were recruited by generally posted advertisements and by announcement in introductory psychology classes, and after the first year, by word-of-mouth from previous year participants. Students with interest in education or counseling were not targeted particularly, but students with such interests of course may have found the program goals more interesting, and so have self-selected. Students were asked to address the program's impact on their career goals in their progress reports, and in all cases people who had begun with an interest in education, report their interest solidified. Two students decided during the program to pursue education, one switching from an architecture major, and the other considering it as a viable alternative to medical school, should she not get in. Two students from the first year (these students have by and large graduated from college) have their teaching licenses: One is head teacher in a Pre-K program, the other a substitute at P. S. 92, hoping to get a position there once he has his citizenship and can fully qualify. One education major broadened to apply to libraries for a position, as she had become so interested in children's literature and the library project itself. She is a librarian now, being sent at her employers' expense to library school for a graduate degree. Her stated plan is to run her own children's reading room, and continue, on a grand scale the reading mentorship she had begun.

On the negative side, we must consider students who either left the program or who left school. The first year, there was no attrition from the program, but one student (a single mother with three children) left school, maintaining her service to the program. She ultimately moved out of the city and pursued an associate's degree, with a career in home care for disabled children, influenced (she asserted) by her work in the program. The second year four students stopped participating, one of them leaving school to work during the first semester, and the others not returning to the program after the summer, also because of job changes (but they stayed in school). The final year we lost three students, one to political activism during the first semester, and the other two not returning after the summer. As we

have no way of assessing whether the positive moves are abnormally good, we have no way of knowing whether this attrition rate is normal for our students in these financially difficult times for those needing public higher education.

A final consideration is the number of students who have continued in community service, starting mentorship programs of their own. Again, note that this is a cohort who selected to participate in a service program, so they had a pre-existing interest. They have shared, however, how valuable they thought the experience was, and come forward for advice on funding or implementing their programs. From the first year, one student organized a mentorship program to continue at the school (Appendix C), one organized an afterschool daycare program in her building, one organized a camp/mentorship program through his church. As mentioned earlier, a number of students continued to volunteer at the school, or elsewhere in the community.

Consider some of the last year's students' assessments of the programs impact on themselves:

-The program has taught me to have and to expect higher standards for myself and others. I don't know if the program had the same impact on the other mentors but for me the depth of my gratitude is very deep. I have always had ideas about the way I think certain things should be, but I never felt, up until now, that I could make any difference or that I had anything to say that someone would listen to.

-I can't express how enjoyable and inspiring it was to converse with my peers and my teachers in an open forum, roundtable setting ... when I left seminar I felt charged.

-The program has reaffirmed my commitment to teach; [it has] released emotions that reaffirm myself.

-Whoever thought being a mentor would affect such a big part of one's life? It has helped me understand the world of children's literature. I have enjoyed seeing children grow. It has strengthened my goal of being a teacher.

Program "Products"

Appendix F is the result of the work of the "Book Acquisition" group, self-selected to research and share good children's books with the seminar group. Each year they prepared an annotated bibliography, compiled as one the last year. The compilation shows the acquisition, not only of good children's literature, but also of reviewing and abstracting skills, and is the result of deep discussion on what makes a book good in general, and what are the needs and interests of these children in particular. In the process of preparing this bibliography, and

in all students' discovery of books, we learned of their first-time familiarity with such classics as Aesop's fables (a student wrote that she was as curious as her children as to how "To bell the cat" ended) or Pandora's box (a "review" told the whole story, clearly not recognizing that it was a well-known one).

We have already noted that the school has now an on-line circulating library. Four mentors have acquired computer skills in setting the system up, and about seven mentors have learned library skills in the process of organizing and weeding the collection. One student is now a librarian.

Two premedical students are engaged in medical research, through the contacts and recommendation of the program faculty. One has a co-authored publication as a result. About half the final year class delivered a joint presentation at a "brown bag lunch" to a faculty group on campus, the students acquiring the skills to address such an audience and rehearsing in seminar.

Five students are working with me on evaluating the children's reading changes, and I hope that we will be able to publish the results of that study collaboratively.

Summary and Conclusions

57 college students and about 150 elementary school students participated in a reading and mentoring program, which both groups for the most part described as moving, intense, enjoyable, and educational. Objective outcomes measurement was hampered by lack of appropriate control groups, not by design, but by circumstance. It appears that college student GPA improved, as did the overall reading scores at the school. "Portfolio"-type assessments also indicate quality products from the college students, and greater than normal participation in advanced courses and the academic experience.

The project was demonstrably successful as far as the public school was concerned, enhancing their resources and the quality of their instruction. Whether this will have a long-term benefit, and a measurable one, in a community fighting poverty, government cutbacks, disease, drugs, homelessness, etc. is unknowable. Likewise, the project was embraced by the children participating and may have had profound consequences for some (those whose mothers returned to school, the child who began to wear her glasses, etc.), but whether this translates across the sample into greater likelihood of completing school or entering college or becoming lifelong readers, is unknowable. We plan to follow those children who remain at the school, but follow-up is hard with a population in such flux.

Most of the participating college students became more focused and academic during the course of the program, but this did not translate into measurable change in GPA, nor do I expect it to, in writing skills. The effects that we noticed I believe are attributable to the amount of individual attention the students received from faculty, the effectiveness of this particular team in a team-teaching approach, and the mutual focus on advancing the children of the Harlem community. The focus on

literacy, writing, journal-keeping etc. I do not feel affected English skills particularly, and I believe that the increased participation in academics may have resulted from any focus, not just English. As a result of this experience, I am a strong advocate of "service learning," particularly for nontraditional students, but I am concerned that I cannot back my conviction of its efficacy with hard numbers.

Reading mentoring program is a boon to second graders

A three-year collaboration between City College and the Mary McLeod Bethune School (P.S. 92) in Harlem is inspiring Harlem second-graders with a love for reading.

Financed by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), the City College Reading Mentor Partnership pairs CCNY students with second-graders in a "bedtime story" routine two days per week for a year. Some 20 CCNY students and 80 second graders have participated in the program each year.

Classroom teachers have observed marked improvements in the children's interest in reading and in their general motivation to learn.

Vivien Tartter, professor of psychology at City College, founded the program.

"Deep bonds have been established between mentors and children, who are often of similar racial or ethnic backgrounds, sometimes with profound results," she said.

"For example, four children labeled as having behavioral problems became 'normal' students," according to Professor Tartter, "while a child who had not spoken in two years following several deaths in the family began to communicate and

became 'a changed child' according to the child's mother, thanks to mentor Pamela Barrowell."

The children are assigned to caring, responsible, academically oriented role models, Professor Tartter said. The CCNY students focus on introducing the children to great literature from a multicultural perspective (Faith Rhinegold, Langston Hughes) as well as great books of the Western literary tradition (fairy tales, classical mythology, Beverly Cleary, Judy Blume).

"People of all cultures love stories, and story-sharing is primarily a social activity," Professor Tartter said. "When we gather 'round the campfire, we share stories for entertainment and for education in the society's moral code - through tales of its mythic figures, heroes, heroines and villains."

In CCNY's program of one-on-one reading, "the children learn to see books as an interesting part of social communication, embraced by 'cool teenagers' from backgrounds similar to theirs," she noted.

Tartter stressed that beginning readers understand stories far beyond their reading level.

"Reading restricted to the child's age-level fails to challenge their imagination," she said.

Appendix A-1

Unique Collaboration Between CCNY And P.S. 92 Inspires Reading Among 2nd-Graders

A three-year collaboration between the City College of New York (CCNY) and the Mary McLeod Bethune School (P.S. 92) in Harlem is inspiring Harlem second-graders with a love for reading.

Financed by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), the City College Reading Mentor Partnership pairs CCNY students with second-graders in a "bed-time-story" routine two days per week for a year. Some 20 CCNY students and 60 second-graders have participated in the program each year.

Classroom Teachers have observed marked improvements in the children's interest in reading and their general motivation to learn.

Vivien Tartter, Professor of Psychology at City College, founded the program.

"Deep bonds have been established between mentors and children, who are often of similar racial or ethnic backgrounds, sometimes with profound results," said Professor Tartter. "For example, four children labeled as behavioral problems became 'normal' students, while a child who had not spoken in two years, following several deaths in the family, began to communicate and became 'a changed child' according to the child's mother, thanks to mentor Pamela Barnwell."

The children are assigned to caring, responsible, academically oriented role models. The CCNY students focus on introducing the children to great literature from a multicultural perspective (Faith Rhiegold, Langston Hughes), as well as great books of the Western literary tradition (fairy tales, classical mythology, Beverly Cleary Judy Blume).

"People of all cultures love stories, and story-sharing is primarily a social activity," Professor Tartter said.

"When we gather 'round the campfire, we share stories for entertainment and for education in the society's moral code -- through tales of its mythic figures, heroes, heroines and villains."

In CCNY's program of one-on-one reading "the children learn to see books as an interesting part of social communication, embraced by 'cool teenagers' from backgrounds similar to theirs," Tartter noted.

Dr. Tartter stressed that beginning readers understand stories way beyond their reading level.

"Reading restricted to the child's age-level fails to challenge their imagination," said Professor Tartter.

Juanita Johnson, a City College alumna, is Assistant Principal of P.S. 92 and coordinates the program at the school.

"The CCNY Reading Mentor Partnership has become a vital part of P.S. 92," said Ms. Johnson. "Our Teachers consider the student-mentors as valuable partners in the children's education, and the children eagerly anticipate the arrival of their 'big friends.' We hope this program will continue to be part of our school for many years to come."

After the program terminates each year, many mentors remain as volunteers at the school, chaperoning field trips and assisting special-needs children, according to Professor Tartter.

"Many of the City College mentors have decided to become Teachers as a result of their positive experiences," said Pamela Laskin of CCNY's English Department and a children's book writer.

Mentors have also volunteered for after-school tutoring, assisted teachers in crowded classrooms and mentored psychologically needy children.

Thanks to the program, P.S. 92 will have a circulating library for the first time in over a decade.

CCNY Students Are 'Big Friends' to Nearby School

The City College Reading Mentor Partnership pairs CCNY students with second graders at PS 92 in Harlem in a "bed-time-story" routine designed to inspire a love of reading. This past school year, some 20 City students and 60 second graders worked together two days a week. PS 92 teachers say they have seen marked increases in the children's motivation to learn and to read.

CCNY Psychology Professor Vivien Tartter heads the program, which she founded in 1992. The one-on-one reading together approach helps children "learn to see books as an interesting part of social communication, embraced by 'cool teenagers' from backgrounds similar to theirs," she says.

Many mentors have stayed on as volunteers after their formal stint is over—helping teachers in crowded classrooms, tutoring in afterschool programs, chaperoning trips and working with emotionally needy children. Several College students were inspired to become teachers.

Professor Tartter observes that deep bonds have formed between the children and their mentors. "One child who had not spoken in two years, following several deaths in the family, began to communicate and became a 'changed child' according to the child's mother, thanks to mentor Pamela Barnwell."

Assistant Principal Juanita Johnson, the program's coordinator at the school, says, "Teachers see the student-mentors as valuable partners and the children eagerly anticipate the arrival of their 'big friends.'"

City student Lourdes Gomerá brought the second graders to the Countee Cullen Library to get their first library cards. And thanks to the program, the school will have its first circulating library, headed by school media-specialist Edna Friedlander, supported by CCNY's Social Science Division. Student Lamon Fenner, an announcer at City's radio station, WHCR-FM, arranged for three children to read their poetry on the air. Isidro Mejía organized a penpal program between PS 92 and PS 192. And Wilfredo Ramirez put together a Halloween party at City for the youngsters.

Professor Tartter stresses that beginning readers understand stories far

beyond their own reading level.

"Reading restricted to the child's age-level fails to challenge their imagination," so, "when we gather 'round the campfire, we share stories for entertainment and education in society's moral code—through tales of mythic figures, heroes, heroines and villains."

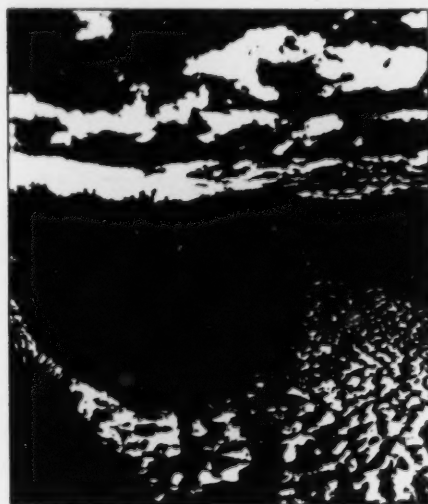
Among the people Professor Tartter works closely with are: City's Elementary Education Department Chairman Oliver Patterson, Pamela Laskin of the English Department and Assistant Principal Johnson, who earned her certificate in educational administration at City.

Professor Patterson, whose specialty is literacy, helps me understand literacy acquisition, classroom management and development. Ms. Laskin, a children's book author and teacher writing-for-children, recruits authors to visit PS 92 and assists student-mentors in teaching poetry writing and oral reading year. PS 92 participated in CCNY's annual Spring Poetry Festival which Ms. Laskin co-organizes.

Financed by the US Department of Education's Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, the program has received help from Smith-Barney, Barnes & Noble, Ben & J. and McDonald's of Harlem.



City College students like Pamela Barnwell have become close to the children they meet at Harlem's PS 92. The youngsters respond both emotionally and academically. Here, Barnwell gives a loving hug to from left, Will Jones, Robert Grant and Krystal Martin.



"Untitled Landscape" by photography student Matthew Bogovich.

College Art Gallery Gears Up for Displays of CCNY Talent

Alumni are more than welcome to stop by and peruse the free-of-charge, ongoing exhibitions at the City College Art Department Gallery, located in Compton-Guerhels Hall at 140th Street at Amsterdam Avenue. The Gallery is open Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., throughout the academic year.

Students and faculty display their work in a variety of genres. The Gallery ran a show of undergraduate paintings and drawings from Aug. 28-Sept. 15 and, as The Alumni went to press, was in the midst of its annual Photography Students' Show—Sept. 12 through Oct. 6.

Coming up next is the Annual Art Show, running from Oct. 10-27. Department professors will exhibit their own paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs and other creative work.

Throughout the rest of the semester, Master's of Fine Arts students hold exhibitions. The schedule is as follows: Oct. 20-Nov. 3, Jinhee Kim and Feng Tzeng; Nov. 6-12, Ruby L. Rebecca Teeters; Nov. 13-17, Ben '83 and Young-Ho Kim; Nov. 20-22, Conoval '95; Nov. 27-Dec. 1, N. Kubo and Mary Roth; Dec. 4-9, S. Poist and Ken Weir; Dec. 11-13, Benelli '95 and Barbara Wesker; Dec. 19-22, Rafael Morales '82.

For further information about the shows, contact Professor Bruce Halperin at (212) 650-7426.

Date: March 9, 1994
From: Isidro Mejia
To: Prof. Tartter

The exchanging of letters between the two 3rd grade classes of P.S. 92 and the 3rd grade class of P.S. 192 is a great activity to keep children interested in writing. Many times when teachers ask their students to write, children often don't know what to write about. But when they write to their penpals it doesn't seem to be a problem for the children. The children find it easier and write a lot more. In the letters they ask each other many questions. They tell each other funny stories. The children draw pictures to each others. A few of the children at P.S. 192 started to send their pictures to the children at P.S. 92, and this had a big respond; More children wanted to write to more than one penpal. So this gave me the idea of taking the picture of all the children at P.S. 92 who are in the project and have them send it to their penpals. I am doing this because I know some of the children at P.S. 92 can not afford it. I will also provide the children at P.S. 192 with the same option of having their picture taken so they can also send it to their penpal at P.S. 92. They find the letter-writing to be a fun activity, but at the same time, their teachers and I, see it also as an educational activity. Every time I walk-in one of the three class rooms the children get very excited and the first thing they ask me is did you bring the letters? This tells

me that they are enjoying what they are doing and wish to do this type of activity more often.

Sometimes I get the chance to sit down in some of the classrooms while the children write their letters. This is a lot of fun and a good experience for me, because since I want to become an Elementary teacher, I get to see how children write, and how they think, how quiet they are while writing, what problems they have with vocabulary and spelling, and much more things that goes on in an Elementary classroom. I also help them develop their thought and put it into meaning and well structured writing if they ask for my help. The teachers love it when I stay and help the children with their writing or any other activity that is going on when I come in. The teachers love me staying because they can really use all the help they can get.

I also believe many other children would be benefited with a project like this. This project is the key to creating writing, where children can express themselves without worrying about being penalized for little mistakes that can be fixed by practicing their writing rather than with an "F". This project can also have the children become really interested in writing; the children are not limited to one subject like in most case, in most of the children writing activities. Thus, other schools could also be benefited by using this type of writing activity. And I would be willing to expand

my service and speak to other schools in the community and have them participate in the letter-writing activity that P.S. 92 and P.S. 192 already enjoy.

Name: Isidro Mejia
Professor: V. Tartter
Date: 04/26/94

Appendix B-2

When all the letters, along with the pictures, were delivered to Ms. Columbel's (P.S. 192), from P.S. 92, on the week of the picture exchange on April 25, 1994, there was an immediately impact on the penpal program during that week; 34 letters were written back to P.S.92 from P.S.192. That's 6 letters extra, since, P.S.192 only has 28 students. I attribute these results to the exchange of the children's pictures. It seems to me that the exchanging of the picture increased the quantity of the letters; there was a 100% letter responses from Ms. Columbel's class compared to 90% responses earlier through out the year.

Another aspect of the Penpal program that has been affected, by the inclusion of exchange of picture in the program during that week, is the length of the children's letters from P.S. 192. There were nine children (Nordis F., Alvaro, Natalie, Oscarina, Kenny<wrote to two children> , Roberto V., Kennya T.<wrote to two children>, Joel and Nelia R.<two children>) who wrote letters with four or more paragraphs in them. There were six children who wrote letters with three paragraphs (Nelia, Kennya, Ibrahim, Charisma, Monica, Kenny). The rest of the children wrote letters of two paragraphs. Most of the letters that have been written before the exchange of pictures were basically from 1 to 3 paragraphs, but after the pictures the length of the letters increased from 2 to 5 paragraphs. I had never seen a letter of 5 paragraphs in my pick-ups before, from neither school; but in my last pick-up from P.S. 192 I saw 2 letter with 5 paragraphs each (Alvaro's and Kennya's).

Children had to give descriptions of who they were in the picture, since, I took picture of two children per picture. I think this contributed to enhance the children writing. Now they have more to talk about. They either described themselves as either

being on the right or left. Some used gender distinction. And other described the clothes they were wearing.

Compared to Ms. Scott's , whose children wrote their letters before having received or send their pictures, on the week of April 13, 1994, Ms. Columbel's children wrote a lot more than Ms. Scott's class. In Ms. Scott's class, 2 children <3 paragraphs letters>(Robert and Crystal), 2 children wrote letters of two paragraphs (Janina and Alisha) and the rest 1 paragraph letters. The longest letter from P.S. 92 (Ms. Scott's)class during the week of the exchange of letters contained 58 words. The shortest letter I received, during that week, was sent by Henry; he wrote a 3 sentences letter, with only 25 words in it. The longest letter from Ms. Columbel's children contained 100 words (Alvaro's) and shortest 50 words (Cindy's).

Thus, to this point the pictures exchange has received the most feedback. There were more letters written back from one school to the other and also longer letters, too.

Help a Kid, become a Teacher's Assistance

The Aspira Hispanic Club of C.C.N.Y. is having a volunteer program to help 3rd graders from the community of Harlem.

If you are free between the hours of 12 noon to 3 pm, you can become a volunteer Teacher's Assistance. With your assistance, you will be able to help Kids to improve their study skills. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer Teacher Assistance, please come to

Baskerville building room 111

please contact Mr. Willie Ramirez at (718) 481-8525 or extension 20451(campus).

Hope you can join us.....

Remember that kids are the key
to our future.

Appendix C

1. Organization

- A. 10 = essay is well-organized response to topic, maintains focus, sense of pattern present from beginning to end, clear paragraphs, fine paragraph transitions.
1 = essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization.
- B. 10 = essay is concise, but contentful.
1 = essay is wordy, meanders through topics.

2. Idea Development

- A. 10 = Conclusions are drawn and examples supporting it are detailed.
1 = Assertions are not supported.
- B. 10 = Information given relates well to topic.
1 = Unclear relations between examples and conclusions.
- C. 10 = The quantity of information is appropriate for the conclusions drawn.
1 = There is too little information or too much information to make the points.

3. Vocabulary

- A. 10 = Vocabulary is well-suited to context.
1 = words misused; vocabulary limited.
- B. 10 = Vocabulary is standard, formal English.
1 = Vocabulary includes slang or colloquial English.
- C. 10 = language is used in an interesting manner.
1 = language is stilted or trite.

4. Mechanics (10=perfect; 1=poor)

- A. Spelling
- B. Punctuation - Capitalization
- C. Inflections (standard vs. nonstandard, noun-verb agreement)
- D. Sentence structure
10 = complex, appropriately delimited.
1 = simple, repetitive, or many run-ons and sentence fragments

Appendix B-1

Essay Grade

Code # _____

I. Organization

- A. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor excellent
- B. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
wordy concise

II. Idea Development

- A. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
unsupported clear conclusions
conclusions
- B. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor relation clear relation
between examples and conclusions
- C. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
too little appropriate
amount of information

III. Vocabulary

- A. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor use vocabulary well-suited
- B. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
colloquial standard, formal
- C. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
uninteresting interesting
use of language

IV. Mechanics

- A. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor good
spelling
- B. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor good
punctuation
- C. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor good
inflections
- D. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
poor good
sentence structure

Appendix D-2

Today they really didn't feel like reading. I brought in a chapter book because "Clifford the Red Dog" and those types of books are too easy for both of them. They read 2 pages to me and they wanted to stop. I asked them if they were interested in finding out the rest of the story and their response was "no." They wanted to do math so I made them read 2 more pages and then we did math for the rest of the period. ↑

Year 1 Mentor- Early (Feb.) entry

Today the author Ms. Wayne came to visit P. S. 92. The children seemed to be very excited. The children asked questions. They mainly inquired how she felt when her writings were rejected, and how many times did she rewrite her literature. She tried to answer as many as possible and all the kids seemed pleased.

At approximated 1:15 I got Shakina and I told her about the pen-pals. Initially she was not interested. She said that she didn't want a pen-pal. George's kids were sitting across from us and she saw them writing. So, I told Shakina that she would be the only student without a pen-pal. After a couple of minutes she began writing and she wrote about 5 or 6 sentences. After she finished we went over her letter together. She wrote "I is" instead of I am and I told her that its I am. She said that it is I is and not I am. I told her it's I am and her response was, "Well I say I is." I didn't say anything and just continued correcting her paper. As Vicky said in the seminar, I should have then told her that the way she says it is not wrong but when you are in school, you have to say I am. I didn't tell her this and I regret it deeply. However, I will have plenty of opportunities to tell her this before the semester comes to an end.

Another mistake she made was "I with like you to meet you." When I asked her to read it to me she said would and spelled it correctly when I asked her to. She said she made the mistake while she was writing. This mistake was written twice. It seems as if this mistake is made constantly. When she reads she says words that are not there. I am not taking this too seriously because I know this is pretty common however, I am going to continue to observe these mistakes.

We continued reading over the letter and she left out the commas. I filled them in for her but not explaining why I inserted them. I loved Oliver's way of explaining it to the children. I should have, as Oliver said, to say the sentence and for her to notice when she pauses; tell her that the way to indicate a pause is by using a comma. I realize the mistakes that I have made in explaining to Shakina what she should have written. I now have some ways of explaining to children how to use punctuation and how one should write when doing a school project.

Year 1 Mentor- Late (Nov.) Entry

Name: Michael Johns

Age: 8

Grade: 2

Title: The Black Snowman

Name: Julius Sallie

Age: 7

Grade: 2

The Black Snowman was a great story to read to them. I wish it was the first story I had to read to them. This is a story I will read to my children some day. The story talks the past and the present. They could relate to the little boy and his brother and how they were poor. The little boy was glad to have the little bit his mother was able to provide. The older brother was never happy and never excited over the good things that happen in the house. Mike and Julius loved the story and Mike even had a few words to say. I think he is coming around, but he needs more of a push.

↑
Year 2 - Early (Feb.) entry

Today was a lovely day. The title of the book to day is "lovely Summer". The story was about some little rabbits who ate some people's garden. They loved the book and Thomas brought his glasses to school. Thomas has a little problem with his attention span. His attention span is very short. I sent Mike back to the room so that I could read with Thomas and help them improve his attention span.

Today Henry and I read the book "Shortcut". He didn't want to read the book or listen to me. The day was a flop with Henry. Henry has been in this mood for some time. I hope he kicks this mood he's in. I asked him what was wrong with him and he doesn't want to talk.

Year 2 - Late (Nov.) entry

Appendix E-2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Cherish Me

I Sprang up from mother earth
She clothed me in her own colors
I was nourished by father sun
He glazed the pottery of my skin
I am beautiful by design
The pattern of night in my hair
The pattern of music in my rhythm
As you would cherish a thing of beauty
Cherish me

BOOK ACQUISITION GROUP

Arlene Boxhill
Pamela Laskin
Alice Baldwin-Jones
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Wanda Riveria

*compiled and revised this edition

Cover: Taken from the book, Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea, by Joyce Carol Thomas and illustrations by, Floyd Cooper. Harper Collins Publisher, 1993

ANTHOLOGIES

D'AULAIRE'S BOOK OF GREEK MYTHS, Dell, 1962.

These are ancient Greek myths simplified for children. Included are such gods and goddesses as Zeus with his fistful of thunderbolts; Athena, goddess of wisdom and greedy King Midas. The pictures are great, too.

IMPS, DEMONS, WITCHES, FAIRIES AND ELVES, Leonard Baskin.
Pantheon Books.

This book is a collection of scary, eerie, mysterious and interesting characters. Each one has his or her own story to tell. This book is frightening and exciting.

AH MAN, YOU FOUND ME AGAIN, Mary Anne Gross. Beacon Press, 1972.

This book is a collection of poems and stories told by New York City Black and Latino children (ages five-ten). They reflect the freshness and naturalness of language, and the freedom of dialect that Mary Anne Cross feels has been destroyed by contemporary culture.

GREG HIDELEBRANDT'S FAVORITE FAIRY TALES, Greg Hidelbrandt.
Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1984.

These fairy tales are beautifully illustrated by the author/editor. Greg Hidelbrandt has collected the world's best-loved fairy tales like "The Little Mermaid" and "Sleeping Beauty" and Greek mythology like "The Story of Perseus" and "The Story of Polyphemus, The Cyclops;" all of these are in one enormous, lovely book. His illustrations are fabulous--pictures painted in rich, bold colors. This book is a must!

TALES FROM TIME PAST, Bryan Holme. Viking Press, 1977.

This wonderful and enchanting book will delight anyone whose heart has been captured by fairy tales. This is a collection of the world's best fairy tales, folklore, rhymes and poetry. These delightful tales are accompanied by bold, rich and colorful illustrations as well as black and white sketches.

A HARVEST OF RUSSIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, Miriam Morton.
University of California Press, 1967.

According to Miriam Morton, "Of all the arts, it was literature that has always played the star role in Russian culture." Miriam Morton writes with an enormous love for literature. She hopes to share her love with the rest of the world through this anthology.

"I'll water you
My dears,
Till a Magic Tree
Appears
For all poor
Girls and Boys
Without shoes
Without toys."

(Pg. 31)

SCARY STORIES TO TELL IN THE DARK, MORE SCARY STORIES TO TELL IN THE DARK, SCARY STORIES 3, Alvin Schwartz. Harper Collins, 1991.

These are a collection of terrifying, frightening very short folktales and stories which could scare the pants off an adult!

POETRY

SING A SONG OF POPCORN, Scholastic, 1988,

Children are natural poets; thus, it is important that they read and write poetry. The editors are aware of this passion; this is obvious when scanning the introduction. It features wonderful poets such as: Robert Frost, Ogden Nash, Langston Hughes, Nikki Giovanni etc. The book is thematically organized by topics: fun with rhymes; mostly weather; spooky poems; story poems; mostly animals; mostly people; mostly nonsense; seeing, feeling, thinking and in a few words. The illustrations are beautiful. This book is a must!

FAST AND SLOW, John Ciardi. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1975.

This book is sub-titled poems for advanced children and beginning parents; it's a collection of thirty-four humorous and nonsense verses certain to make you chuckle. There are lots of delightfully funny rhymes such as, "He lived Alas, in a House Too Big." This particular poem is about a man who gets lost in one of the rooms of his very large mansion. He is unable to find his way out so he calls the police and the marines to find him. Another whimsical feature is, "On Being Too Right to be Polite," a poem about a

little boy who gets rich by changing people a nickel and a dime to watch him be polite.
This book is lots of fun!

TALKING TO THE SUN, Kenneth Koch and Kate Farrell. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

This is a beautifully illustrated anthology of poetry. There are poems about love, conflict, liberty, weather etc. The best aspect of this book is that there is a liberal amount of material from non-traditional cultures.

JOYFUL NOISES, Paul Fleischman, Trumpet, 1988.

This is a poetry book that focuses on animals. There are fourteen wonderful poems that children could either read or act out. It opens with a poem on the 'Grasshopper':

'Sap's rising Grounds warming
Grasshoppers are Grasshoppers
hatching out are
Autumn-laid eggs hatching out.'

All the poems are for two voices, and they're absolutely terrific.

A THIRD POETRY BOOK, John Foster. Oxford University Press, 1982.

This book is filled with all sorts of fun and fantastic poems to make you laugh, gasp and think. Verses tell stories of monsters, the growing pains of childhood and of interesting people with interesting names and habits. You'll enjoy reading, "Mr. Choo" a poem about a man from China who, after telling people his name, respond with a "Bless you; Bless you." So, get ready to laugh and smile; the illustrations and funny lines will keep you going for awhile."

UNDER THE SUNDAY TREE, Eloise Greenfield. Harper Trophy, 1988.

This is a wonderful book of poems written about nature, animals, families, places, events and people as seen through the eyes of a child. Eloise Greenfield captures the pure images of childhood in terms of exploring the world around children and seeing life through their eyes. The short verses are accompanied with bright, colorful paintings by Mr. Amos Ferguson. His pictures illustrate lovely, warm summer scenes of children having fun and doing things they may enjoy like fishing, for instance. There are also pictures of families being together for special events such as a wedding. Children and adults alike will enjoy this special book.

READER'S DIGEST CHILDREN'S BOOK OF POETRY, Beverly Mathia.
Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1992.

This is a book about life from a child's point of view. It treats weddings, family, friendship, animals, the weather and more. According to the author, "some poems contain images; some tell stories; some are for thinking about; others are for the sheer joy of words."

SECRETS OF A SMALL BROTHER, Richard T. Margolis. Macmillan, 1984.

This book is a collection of poems about growing up with a brother, about the experiences shared; about the highs and lows. It is a wonderful book about a very special relationship.

THE INNER CITY MOTHER GOOSE, Eve Merriam. Simon & Schuster
NY, 1969

For a child growing-up in the city, each and every experience is a poetic verse; no matter how unsavory the experience might be. The writings in Merriam's *The Inner City Mother Goose*, clearly demonstrates that. The collection of poems is a computation of the day-to-day episodes, promising and ugly experiences that take place in the inner city. Merriam demonstrates that poetry is about life.

You'll Find Mice

You'll find mice, see how they run!
They all ran out from behind the stove,
One climbed on the table and down the dove,
Then over the bread box he poked his head,
And back to his favorite spot once more,
To the bureau drawer that's set out on the floor
For baby's bed.

BROWN ANGELS, Walter Dean Myers. Harper Collins, 1993.

BROWN ANGELS is a treasure of a book. Author Walter Dean Myers has searched through antique shops, flea markets, auction houses and museum collections to find pictures of African American children living around the turn of the century. Each spectacular picture of the nostalgic past is accompanied by Myers' poems depicting the experiences of Black Americans.

I LIKE POEMS AND POEMS LIKE ME, Penny Pagliaro. Press Pacifica
Publisher, Hawaii

I Love The World
 I love you, Big World.
 I wish I could call you
 and tell you a secret:
 That I love you, World.

Paul Wollner, age 7

Through the eyes of a child the world and its' many offerings have a place in a child's mind. I like Poems and Poems Like Me, take you on the never ending adventure of a world possessed only by a child. Everything from the simple pleasures of climbing a tree, Saturday shopping, watching the rain fall, and learning how to whistle, this collection of children's poetry captures it all.

RANDOM HOUSE GUIDE OF POETRY FOR CHILDREN, Jack Prelutsky.
 Random House, 1983.

A superb collection of children's poetry divided into the following categories: nature is; the four seasons; dogs and cats and bears and bats; children/children everywhere; Me I am etc. This book is fun!

RAINY DAY RHYMES, Gail Radley. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston 1992.

Understanding
 Sun
 and rain
 and wind
 and storms
 and thunder go together.

There has to be a little bit of each
 to make the weather.

Myra Cohn Livingston

What better way to spend a rainy afternoon then to curl up and listen to , *Rainy Day Rhymes*? There are rhymes that talk about, rainy nights, Spring rain, umbrellas, mud, and storm noises. For writer Myra Cohn Livingston, she captures it all in her piece titled, *Understanding*; she brings it all together.

POENISHA, Andrea Ross. Winston-Derek, 1986.

This is a collection of poems about children's experiences and issues, narrated by a child named Poenisha. The subjects include: shyness, friendship and belonging. It's a great book that can facilitate a fine discussion.

A LIGHT IN THE ATTIC, Shel Silverstein. Harper & Row, 1974.

"There is a light in the attic
Though the house is dark and shuttered,
I can see flickerin' flutter
And I know what it's about."

Shel Silverstein taps into children's innermost feelings, and also creates a vast array of funny characters children will love.

GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE, Corrine Strich. Greenwillow Books, 1984.

A delightful book about grandparents which is very inspirational. The poems in this book can elicit fine discussions about love of grandparents.

FIRST VOICES, Geoffrey Summerfield. Alfred A. Knopf, 1970

Everything for the silly, absurd, magical, mysterious, and everyday life, *First Voices* covers it all. A four volume anthology of original and traditional rhymes and poems by poets from around the world. Some include works are original pieces by children themselves! A great way of introducing a child to the many wonders of words.

Poem

I can hear the trees whispering
The cat purring
The dogs barking
no wonder I can't get to sleep
I can hear my dad in a rage
tearing up a page
into little bits
while my mother sits
crying
no wonder I can't get to sleep.

Susan Davie, age 8

AUTHOR STUDIES

THE GARDEN OF ABDUL GASAZI, Chris Van Allsburg. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979.

This is an unusual story of a little boy, Alan Mitz and a dog named Fritz who gets into lots of trouble. The dog is very playful and mischievous and keeps Alan busy trying to keep up with him. One day while taking the dog on an afternoon walk through his neighborhood, Fritz runs off towards a magician's garden. The boy also wanders into the garden, looking for the dog, and come upon the magician--Abdul Gasazi's--mansion. Alan asks the magician about Fritz. Abdul Gasazi leads Alan into his backyard where the boy is shown many ducks waddling around on the lawn. Abdul Gasazi tells Alan that when his dog wandered into his garden, he changed the dog into a duck using magic. In the end, the reader can decide whether this is true or not. The book is illustrated with lovely pencil and charcoal drawings in black and white which certainly adds to the story's off-beat mood. It comes highly recommended.

THE STRANGER, Chris Van Allsburg. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1986.

Chris Van Allsburg's books are wonderfully alive with his simple, off-beat narratives and unique artistic talents. *THE STRANGER* is the story of a farmer named Bailey who, while driving his truck down a road, runs over a man. Feeling frightened and taking great pity on the man, Farmer Bailey brings him home to his farm where a doctor is called. The doctor confirms that as a result of the accident, the stranger has lost his memory. Farmer Bailey and his family offer the stranger the comforts of their home until he recovers from his amnesia. During his stay with the Bailey's, the stranger proves himself to be a help around the farm. Bailey's little daughter and all the animals around him adore the stranger. He even proves to be a fine musician and entertainer. This delightful story takes place during autumn, and the illustrations are rich with the colors of the season. One can easily "feel" the coolness and briskness of the story's atmosphere, but it is a story certain to warm the heart.

THE MILLIONTH EGG, Bernice Myers. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1991.

The chickens are the stars in this story when they put on a play to protest their disagreement with a farmer who wants to tear down their farm their barn and build a restaurant in its place. This would mean, of course, they had to leave their home in the barn, but they had nowhere else to go. In the middle of all of this, each chicken continues laying eggs and preparing a party to celebrate the laying of the millionth egg. With the help of Rhoda, the leader of the gang, the chickens write a play and act it out to let the farmer know how they feel. It's a success and their story brings the dear farmer to tears. He changes his mind and together with the chickens he opens the restaurant some place else. The millionth egg is great reading and will make you chuckle. Bernice Myers does a good job in bringing the chickens he opens a restaurant some place else. *THE MILLIONTH EGG* is great reading and will make you chuckle. Bernice Myers does a good job in bringing the chickens to life to hatch up some laughs.

THE EXTRAORDINARY INVENTION, Bernice Myers. Macmillan Publishing Co., 1984.

Sally and her father are inventors. They invent everything from Sneaker Finder to the clothes picker upper. This story tells of their most fantastic creation, a creation which would be a surprise for Sally's mother. They invented an enormous machine which they kept adding parts to and each day it grew bigger and bigger. Soon it is finished and Sally's mother is presented with a time machine by her husband. When Sally's mom is asked to step inside, the whole machine begins to rumble. Sally's father senses something is wrong and decides to fix it. When he steps inside, something goes terribly wrong--he turns into a giant chicken. This whimsical book is alive with Bernice Myers wonderful humor. One is certain to get a laugh or two.

BIOGRAPHIES

MALCOLM X, Arnold Adoff. Harper Collins, 1970.

This book speaks about Malcolm X's experiences growing up. It speaks of his humble beginnings, and his turbulent adolescent years--from being a confused and unhappy young man as well as a criminal, to eventually becoming one of the most significant Black leaders of our time. The book uses words that are easy for children to read and understand. In addition, it takes the time to stop and explain new concepts and institutions. For example, the book explains the K.K.K. as well as the Muslim religion.

SUSIE KING TAYLOR, Simeon Block. McGraw-Hill, 1969..

This book speaks about Ms. Taylor's experiences as a civil war nurse. It is loaded with numerous vivid portrayals of battle scenes and life in the South. The book further speaks of Ms. Taylor's difficulties as a woman in a crucial and important role during a male-dominated era. Ms. Taylor is shown to be a character with enormous determination and drive. In addition, the book provides an interesting historical landscape--the Civil War.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire. Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1939

This is a nicely written book about the sixteenth president of the United States. It tells the story of an extraordinary man who was born in a tiny log cabin in Kentucky and grew to greatness to the White House. It is an easy read, and young readers can better identify with honest Abe who was surely a man of wisdom and integrity. There's a great deal of adventure in this book such as when Abe, as a young man, operated a ferry. It was his first job and he and a friend took travelers back and forth down the Mississippi River

in a small boat. One night, some pirates snuck on the boat and attacked Abe, who successfully fought them off, leaving him with a scar over his eyebrow for the rest of his life. This book is fun; it's both history and adventure.

THE HELEN KELLER BOOK, Stew and Polly Anne Graff. Dell, 1965.

This book speaks about Ms. Keller's life experiences and heroic crusade for the blind and deaf. Ms. Keller didn't know how to communicate with the outside world until she learned how to sign. Signing opened up a whole new world for her. Children could learn a lot about the world of the blind and the deaf from this book; in addition, they could learn the value of striving.

GREAT LIVES: THURGOOD MARSHALL, Elizabeth Krug. Fawcett Columbine, 1983.

Thurgood Marshall was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1908. He graduated at the top of his class at Howard University's Law School in 1933. One year later, he began working with the NAACP. He helped move a segregationist nation toward racial justice by battling in court for Black rights in schools. He became the first Negro to serve as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the U.S. Throughout his time as supreme court justice, he fought for the rights of Blacks, minorities, the poor and women. Marshall was a great man, and this is a wonderful biography.

HARRIET TUBMAN, Kate McMillan. Scholastic, 1991.

Harriet Tubman was one of the great fighters and figures of her time. Ms. Tubman was a slave from birth, but she wanted to be free. Not only did she care about her own freedom, but she cared about the freedom of others; thus, she became a conductor for the Underground Railroad. Role models like Harriet Tubman could give children both inspiration and positive guidance.

WINNIE MANDELA, Milton Meltzer. Penguin Books, 1987.

This book describes Winnie Mandela's struggling fight for justice in South Africa. It is interesting because it provides a historical perspective of Winnie Mandela. This is a dramatic story of how love and courage and hope persist against all odds.

MARCHING TO FREEDOM: THE STORY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, Joyce Milton. Dell, 1987.

In 1943, segregation was the norm. "There were separate drinking fountains and signs that said: WHITE ONLY." This book is about how King set out to change all of

this. When he was thirty-five years old, he fought to change the law and the rights of all people. In the process, he was arrested several times, but this did not deter his peaceful battle to change the horrible practices that stood as norms. King was a great man who fought for equality, and this is a great book about him.

JACKIE ROBINSON AND THE STORY OF ALL BLACK BASEBALL, Jim O' Connor,. Random House, 1989.

It all began April 15, 1947, when the Brooklyn Dodgers were playing against the Boston Braves in their homefield. Jackie was on the team, but he had to take a lot of grief since people called him "Nigger" and told him to go back to the cotton field. Jackie persevered, and became the first black to play major league baseball. Jackie Robinson was a black hero who fought for people to judge him by the way he played ball, and not by the color of his skin. He became known as a famous baseball player all over the world.

DIEGO, Jeanette Winter. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1991.

DIEGO tells the story of the famous Mexican artist, Jose Diego Maria Rivera. This wonderful biography is told in English and Spanish and accompanied by Jeanette Winter's unique illustrations. Born in Mexico on December 8, 1886, Diego Rivera rose to fame and people have come to appreciate his art all over the world. He was an artist who painted everything he saw and experienced in his life. These experiences were subjects for huge murals. He painted pictures of his nurse, Antonia, an Indian healer who had taken care of him as a child when he was sick. He painted pictures of the Mexicans who fought in wars to gain equality. He even painted murders taking place right before his eyes. Diego's paintings really tell the story of the Mexican people. This book is a joy to read.

CHAPTER BOOKS

S.O.R. LOSERS, Avi. Avon/ Camelot, 1981.

This is a delightful book that deals with perseverance. S.O.R. (The South Orange River School) is famous for its winning sports' teams, but then along comes a 7th grade soccer team that just can't make it. Encouraged by family friends and themselves, they learn about losing--and also about winning.

SOUNDER, William Armstrong. Harper Trophy.

SOUNDER is a well written book that chronicles the experiences of a southern Black sharecropper family and their tribulations with their favorite pet, Sounder. The story gives good insight into socio-economic issues as well, which is useful in developing

a historical perspective for children. In addition, the language creates a good landscape of the poverty, the oppression and most importantly, the power to endure under hostile conditions

THE DISAPPEARING MAN AND OTHER MYSTERIES, Isaac Asimov.
Walker & Co., 1978.

Move over Sherlock Holmes! Make room for young Larry who is just as good as you are in solving a mystery. Young Larry the sluth finds solutions to five mysteries in this collection of stories by Isaac Asimov, the famed science fiction writer. When the police have not had a single clue about a jewel thief who disappears right under their noses in a murder case, it is Larry who puts his quick mind to work. The wonderful thing about this book is that young readers get a chance to match their wits against Larry's. If you love a mystery, this book is fabulous; it's difficult to put it down once you start reading.

LITTLE MAN LITTLE MAN, James Baldwin. Dial Press

This book, written in black english, is a story of two boys coming of age in Harlem. It is about the surface incidents of daily life that mask a menace in the Harlem streets that is eternal; children and adults who live in a way that only a great novelist can produce. The story dances along with a child's rhythm and resilience as it captures a picture of those who are poor, black and less than five feet high.

LITTLE PETE STORIES, Lila Berg. Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1959 reprinted 1970

This is a collection of short stories about a little boy named Pete who has many adventures. One such adventure is about Pete & the car. Pete is about seven years old and wants to drive. He crawls into a convertible belonging to a man, and begins playing with the steering wheel and making noises like a car engine until the man comes out of his house and catches Pete. Pete goes as far as claiming the man's car as his own by writing a P with a stick; he does this on the dusty hood of the car. This book is full of good laughs; the reader will come to adore little Pete. The chapters are short; a good read for a rainy day.

TALES OF A FOURTH GRADE NOTHING, Judy Blume. Dell/Yearling, 1972.

This is one of a series of delightful books which deals with Peter Hatcher and his pesky little brother, Fudge. Fudge is always in trouble--throwing a tantrum or scribbling all over Peter's homework--and Peter can't stand it. The final straw happens when Fudge walks off with Peter's turtle, Dribble. This book is very, very funny.

MORE STORIES JULIAN TELLS, Ann Cameron. Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.

Julian is only eight years old, but he's wise beyond his years. With the aid of his imagination and his friends, he playfully romps through his neighborhood and discovers important lessons about friends, siblings and family. Julian's mouth gets him in trouble, but he always manages to recover.

THE KID WHO ONLY HIT HOMERS, Matt Christopher. Trumpet Club, 1972.

This is a story of passion--a young boy loves baseball, but baseball doesn't love him. Then one day he meets George Baruth who promises, "to make him one of the best players." This prophecy comes true for Sylvester, but then he must confront his new found fame as well as who George Baruth is.

RAMONA THE PEST, Beverly Cleary. Bantam, 1967.

Cleary's books deal with a cast of characters--Ramona Quimby, Henry Huggins, Beezus and Otis Stoddard to name a few. This particular book follows Ramona's zany adventures as she continues to get into repeated trouble.

THE ORANGE THEORIES AND OTHER STORIES, Charity Dahel. East African Publishing House

The stories in this book depicts giants as they occur in various East African myths. These giants have an appetite for insects, rats, any meat, and human flesh. They could also disguise themselves into any human form. Sometimes they look like old hags, while on other occasions appearing as handsome young men looking for girls. Sometimes their victims manage to turn the tables on them!

WITCHES, Roald Dahl. Penguin Books, 1983.

This is a wickedly funny and ironic book about witches. The author disels any stereotypes about witches; they don't ride around on brooms nor do they wear black capes, but they are definitely an odd lot. This is a fun read-aloud book.

ROYA DELANEY AND THE GOOD GIRL BLUES, Eloise Greenfield. Scholastic.

This book is a classical fictional account of the childhood adventures of inner city Black children. There is a wild cast of characters in this book--from the class bully to the noisy neighbor. The book, told from a child's point of view, is not too dense nor too simplistic. A must read for middle graders.

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY, Dorothy Haas. Scholastic, 1991.

This is a book about two friends--Peanut(a boy) and Jilly(a girl). Together they try to save their school library which is falling apart. Along the way they learn the positive rewards of perseverance.

GREAT UNCLE DRACULA, Jane Harvey. Random House.

This is a fun book about a young girl who goes to live in Transylvania with her uncle who happens to be a vampire. Emily doesn't understand her new classmates who are witches and ghosts and werewolves. Everything is truly weird, though Emily's younger brother finds it lots of fun.

DOG ON THIRD BASE, Constance Hiser. Holiday House, 1991

What do you get when you put together, Spring break, a baseball team, one lost dog, in cranky neighbor, and one big bully and his killer dog? One big mess that requires a lot of team work to get cleaned-up. Dog on Third Base is seven adventurous chapters of how some friends get together during school vacation to prepare themselves for a big baseball game with the older fourth graders. What they prepare themselves for is a lot more than they bargained for!

HEROES AND MONSTERS OF GREEK MYTHS, Benard Evslyn, Dorothy Evslyn, and Need Hoopes. Scholastic Inc.

This book includes a collection Greek Myths that have been told over and over throughout time. Peseus, Daldelus, Thegers, Atlanta, Midas and Pygmalion, are just a few of the all time favorite Greek characters that have enthralled the minds of children over the years.

BUNNICULA, Deborah and James Howe. Avon/ Camelot, 1979.

This is a book about the friendship between three animals--Harold the dog, Chester the cat and the vampire bunny named Bunnacula. Chester and Harold realize there's something strange about Bunnacula when they notice fang marks in the carrots, and then they realize they have to do something about it.

A WRINKLE IN TIME, Madeline L' Engle. Bantam/Doubleday, 1973.

This book is a cross between science fiction, mystery and magic. It follows the adventures of Meg Murray and her younger brother, Charles Wallace. A stranger comes from outer space, possibly from the fifth dimension of time, to confront the two siblings.

The reading level for this book is high, but it would be an interesting book to read to children.

IN THE YEAR OF THE BOAR AND JACKIE ROBINSON. Bette Bao Lord. Harper Trophy, 1984.

This is a wonderful novel that deals with the immigrant experience. When Shirley Temple Wong arrives in America from China she has lots of dreams, but she can't speak English and finds everything difficult. It is 1947 and the year of Jackie Robinson. Shirley discovers baseball, and through Jackie Robinson also discovers hope.

SARAH, PLAIN AND TALL, Patricia MacLachlan. Scholastic, 1985.

Winner of the Newberry Medal, this is a delightful novella about a man in search of a wife. Not only does Jacob need a wife, but Anna & Caleb--his children--need a mother. Anna and Caleb make plans for Sarah's arrival. Sarah is wonderful and wise, but no one is sure whether she'll want to stay in their home. This book has beautifully poetic language.

HOOPLES ON THE HIGHWAY, Stephen Manes

A story of how many things can go wrong on a summer vacation. Alvin Hoople just can't wait to get to Philadelphia. However, the minute the Hooples get on the highway, everything seems to go wrong--including car trouble!

OCTOPUS HUG, Lawrence Pringle.

Jesse and Becky's mother went out, leaving their father babysitting. When the children become grumpy and began to fight, their father invented a game called Octopus Hug. (This book has great pictures of the father playing with the children.)

UFO KIDNAP, Nancy Robinson. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., New York City, N.Y.

This is a book about two local friends who run into a UFO. Roy and Barney are in an adventure of their lives. The aliens in the UFO take the boys to the alien planet, and the excitement begins! This is a great chapter book for children who enjoy science fiction and adventure.

SIDEWAY STORIES FROM WAYSIDE SCHOOLS, Louis Sachar. Avon/Camelot, 1978.

This is a very hilarious book which is basically a series of inter-connected stories that take place at Wayside School. Wayside School is a very unusual school; it's been

built with thirty stories, one on top of another. There are many interesting characters such as Mrs. Gorf, the meanest teacher in the world who changes students into apples. The book is lots of fun.

NATE THE GREAT AND THE STICKY CASE, Marjore Wienman Sharmat. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan Inc, New York, 1978.

This is a mystery that all children would enjoy reading. Nate the Great is a clever detective who is on a big case. He must find a stegosaurus. The stegosaurus is on a stamp that his friend Claude has lost. After investigating all possible clues, he discovers the stamp stuck to the bottom of a shoe which is in the mouth of a dog. This book is intense, exciting and most importantly, humorous.

JELLY BELLY, Robert Kimmel Smith. Dell Readers, 1981.

Ned is eleven years old, very fat and loves to eat. He makes fun of himself and the names he is called--"Blimpie," "Tubby," "Lard Butt," etc, but these names don't stop him from eating. Still, Ned doesn't feel happy about being fat, and realizes he must lose the weight in order to gain a better sense of himself.

ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN SAVES THE DAY, Donald Sobol. Thomas Nelson Inc., 1970

Whether it's a missing electric clock, foot warmer, or treasure map, Leroy Brown, otherwise known as Encyclopedia Brow, is on the case! There isn't any case that can't be solved by Encyclopedia! "He's read more books than anybody in Idaville, and he never forgets a word," that is how he got his nickname. Following in his father's footsteps, Chief Brown, Encyclopedia wanted to solve crimes. Join in on the fun and see if you too can, "save the day".

PACIFIC CROSSING, Gary Soto. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992.

This book is about two Mexican American youths from San Francisco. The two are 'barrio brothers.' Lincoln Mendoza is very interested in martial arts, and very excited about his upcoming trip to Japan. Tony Contreras, the other youth, is equally excited. Both boys find Japan to be a lot different then they imagined; there are many elements of American culture such as baseball and fast food restaurants. The remainder of the book explores the friendship between Lincoln and Mitsuo, a boy he meets in Japan. Lincoln has difficulty describing his mixed Mexican and American heritage. He also struggles to bridge the gap between Mitsuo and Tony. This is an excellent book which deals with stereotyping and prejudice.

***TAMIKA AND THE WISDOM RINGS*, Camille Yarbrough. Random House**

Tamika loves the wisdom rings her Mother and Father gave her. They remind her of all the good things she's learned in the "Sweet Fruit Club"; to be proud of herself, to use her mind freely, to love life. But then, bad things start happening! Can the wisdom of the rings help Tamika make it through?

***THE SHIMMER SHINE QUEENS*, Camille Yarbrough. Random House**

Cruel classmates, a depressed Mother, and a frightened Father are all driving Angie to daydreams. But lately her fantasies aren't doing the trick. Then her 90 year old Aunt Seatta visits and teaches Angie about the kinds of dreams plans used to give them courage and motivation.

Angie creates a dream in which she is proud of her African heritage and dark skin, and where she studies hard and values learning. Through this dream, Angie with the help from her best friend, Michelle and an inspirational teacher, enables the "shimmershine" and the glow that comes with self respect.

PICTURE BOOKS

***MY PAINTED HOUSE, MY FRIENDLY CHICKEN AND ME*, Maya Angelou.**

This book is about an eight year old Ndebule girl in South Africa and her chicken Thandi. The girl loves to share her secrets with her chicken. (the illustrations are beautiful!)

***TEAMMATES*, Peter Goldenbok and Paul Bacon. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1990.**

This is a non-fiction book which describes the relationship between Pee Wee Reese and Jackie Robinson, teammates for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Jackie Robinson faced enormous difficulties as the only Black member of the team, but Pee Wee Reese stood by him with affection and support. This is a wonderful book about prejudice.

***GRANDFATHER TWILIGHT*, Barbara Bergel. Philomel Books, 1984**

This is a wonderful story of an old man with a dog who lives in the magical forest. He is the creator of day and the creator of night. This story is a true legend because of its mystical images and messages.

GRANDMA'S SECRET, Paulette Bourgeois. Little, Brown, and Co., 1990

Living with Grandma not only meant feasting on Jell-o, thick slabs of bologna, chocolate covered marshmallow cookies, and tea with milk and sugar, but it also meant living with her secret! Every morning she would warn me of the bear who lived in the basement, "wouldn't go down there if I were you," and every moving I would wonder if there really was a bear down there or not. Well, one night I got the nerve to investigate if that bear was down there or not. With each step I took, I would hear her say, "wouldn't go down there if I were you." Well, the next day when I sat at the breakfast table I didn't have to wonder anymore, I knew Grandma's secret!

CORNROWS, Camille Yarbough and Carole Byard. Coward-McCann Inc., 1979

This is a heartwarming story of a family telling stories of the beginning of braids in Africa and what each style meant. This book is an inspiration and educational of the past and present richness of "Black Tradition".

CLEAN YOUR ROOM HARVEY MOON, Pat Cummings. Bradbury Press, 1991

Harvey Moon hates to clean his room! Many of us can identify with this. One Saturday when Harvy wants to watch his favorite cartoon, "Creature Zero" his mother makes him clean his room. He reluctantly and hurriedly does this dreaded chore while keeping his eyes on the clock. When he notices that time is slipping away quickly and that he will miss all of his cartoon shows, he stuffs all the junk under a large rug. This is a delightful and funny story that rhymes, and children and adults will enjoy reading it.

JUST US WOMEN, Jeannette Caines. Harper Trophy, 1982

This is an easy flowing story of a girl who plans a trip with her very special Aunt, to a very special place; for just the two of them!

GRANDPA'S FACE, Eloise Greenfield. Trumpet Books.

The young narrator in this book loves her grandfather--the actor--until one day she sees him making a very mean face in the mirror. She takes that look to be a reflection of his anger, and afterwards finds it difficult to warm up to him. This is a delightful book dealing with the differences between reality and acting.

THE MARVELOUS JOURNEY THROUGH THE NIGHT, Helme Heine.
Sunburst Books, 1990

This book is a beautifully written piece of work! The poetic effect of the words contribute to the mysteries of the dream world and those who sleep. There are vivid

pictures of dreams with an imaginative and hilarious angle which kids love. Also, this story awakens us with the security that dreams protect and guide you throughout the night!

WILLIAM'S NINTH LIFE, Minna Jung. Orchard Books, 1993

What do you get when you pair up one old cat named William and one old woman named Elizabeth? A beautiful story of love and companionship. Writer Minna Jung and illustrator Vera Rosenberry collaborated their talents and created the touching story, *William's Ninth Life*.

Confronted one afternoon by a gray-green cat, William learns that his time spent with Elizabeth may soon have to end. Because, "cats have always had nine lives, and cats always move on until the cycle of their lives is complete. Cats never refuse their next life.....," William must now choose his ninth life. Tormented and troubled at the thought of having to leave Elizabeth, William tries to figure out how he can still complete the cycle and still be with Elizabeth.

THE STREETS ARE FREE, Kurusa. Annick Press, 1985.

This is a story about the way children in a Venezuelan city deal with the consequences of a changing national economy. New economic policies cause thousands to move from rural areas to the city, a city which wasn't prepared for a larger population. The children here desire a place to play, and begin a struggle that culminates in the realization of a dream. This is a book about pursuing a dream, even in the face of adversity.

SALMON MOON, Mark Karlins. Scholastic, 1993.

Mrs. Markowitz has lost the magic in her life, so one night she, her granddaughter, Sarah, and Mr. Lutz decide to steal a living, breathing fish from the fish market, and bring him back to sea. When the beautiful salmon is let out into the waters at Coney Island, he leaps and dances in the air until he becomes a beautiful, 'salmon moon.'

YEH-SHEN, retold by Ai-Ling-Louie. Philomel, 1982.

This is a re-telling of an ancient Chinese fairy-tale, very similar to 'Cinderella.' (Perhaps 'Cinderella' is a take-off of this). Yeh-Shen, left in the care of her stepmother, is treated badly; she is unable to attend the festival where her stepmother and stepsister go dancing. In the end it is discovered the beautiful sandal--lost at the dance--can only fit her foot. Thus, she becomes the king's wife.

MISS NELSON IS MISSING, Harry Allard and James Marshal. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1977.

This is an amusing and entertaining book about a lesson in misbehaving. The children take advantage of their teacher and learn their lesson when faced with a mean substitute teacher. This book is a lot of fun!

I WANT TO GO HOME, Alice McLerran. William Morrow & Co., 1992

Marta and her Mom moved into a new house and its taking some getting used to. Marta doesn't like the wallpaper in her room, the shelves in her closet, or Sammy, the cat her Mom brought home. Like Marta, Sammy also doesn't care very much for the new house. Concerned with making sure Sammy doesn't get outside to runaway to his old house, Marta focus is now on taking care of Sammy. With time and each other, both Marta and Sammy learn to like each other and their new home.

WILFRID GORDON McDONALD PARTRIDGE, Fox Mem. Kane/Miller.

A young boy learns about the power of giving through a wonderful older friend in a nursing home. This is a fabulous book about the power of love, and its ability to transcend age.

DANCING WITH THE INDIANS, Angela Shelf Medearis. Scholastic

A young African-American girl travels with her family to visit a Seminole Indian family. Her grandfather was rescued by the Seminoles when he ran away from the plantation and they adopted him. Their arrival is greeted with drums and dancing which takes place until dawn.

THE BLACK SNOWMAN, Phil Mendez. Scholastic, 1989.

Jacob is angry; it's Christmas and his family is Black and poor. "Poor folks like us can't afford Christmas," he tells his younger brother, Pee Wee. Then one day, Jacob and his brother decide to build a 'black snowman' who comes alive through the magic of the kente cloth wrapped around him. The snowman enables Jacob to feel the history and the greatness of being Black.

UNCLE JED'S BARBARSHOP, Margaree King Mitchell. Simon & Schuster, 1993

"Everybody has their favorite relative. Well, Uncle Jedediah was mine." From page one, Sara Jean lets you know how special Jedediah Johnson was. Margaree King Mitchell, writer of, *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* pulls you in and brings back all those

feelings of childhood. In a time when blacks and whites were kept separate, banks were failing, and most people were poor, it was nice to know that not everybody gave up on their dreams. Uncle Jed was one of those people. Through all of the good times and bad times, Uncle Jed never once gave up his dream of opening a barbershop of his very own. No matter what bad luck or misfortunes life had brought him, he never stopped believing in his dream. Because of his strength, persistence, and faith, he showed Sara Jean that dreams do come true!

HAVE YOU SEEN LOUIE?, Muriel A., Munro. Custom Publishing Co., 1970.

Louie is Andy's best friend. Andy is moving into his new apartment, and with all of the packed boxes, Louie gets lost. Andy feels so lonely without Louie that he decides to look for him. He looks everywhere, until--finally--he looks outside. There he discovers Louie, a chameleon who looks like a small, green dragon. Andy tells his two friends they can come to his house and play with Louie; Louie is so happy!

THE DAY JIMMY'S BOA ATE THE WASH, Trinka Hakes Noble. Scholastic, 1980.

This is an exciting fantasy book about a little girl's misadventures on a class trip to a farm. A classmate named Jimmy brings his snake to this trip. The delightful part of the book occurs when Jimmy's boa constrictor meets the chickens, and how things go out of control. The pictures in this book are absolutely wonderful!

THE RAINBOW FISH, Marcus Pfister. North-South Books

The book, *The Rainbow Fish* is about the lessons of sharing. In a sea of fish where there lives schools of common fish, among them was one fish that possessed the beauty of shimmering scales. Admired by little fish and all the others, the rainbow fish did not want to share his beautiful scales. With some coaxing by an octopus; "give a glittering scale to each of the others. You will no longer be the most beautiful fish in the sea, but you will discover how to be happy," the rainbow fish knew what he must do. A lesson of sharing and finding joy, is what *The Rainbow Fish* is all about.

THE LAST TIME I SAW HARRIS, Frank Remkiewicz. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

This is a delightful book based on the intense relationship of a wealthy boy named Edmund and his parrot, Harris. When Harris is blown away by a strong wind, Edmund begins to feel sick until his chauffeur, Higgins, drives him practically around the world, looking for Harris. Finally Harris is found. This is a wonderful book for second graders.

TAR BEACH, Faith Ringgold. Scholastic, 1991.

Cassie Louise Lightfoot is poor and Black, but with the help of her imagination she travels over the streets of New York, past the George Washington Bridge, where the stars and lights glitter in the night. This is a book about the power of imagination.

HERE IS THE ARCTIC WINTER, Madeline Dunphy and Alan James Robinson. Hyperion Books for Children, 1993

Here is the Arctic Winter, is a lyrical and profound way of expressing the realism of this endangered environment. This book will truly inspire those who appreciate the wild life, especially in the Arctic Winter, when it is dark day and night!

UNCLE WILLIE AND THE SOUP KITCHEN, Anne Di-Salvo-Ryan. William Morrow and Co., 1993.

The young narrator in this book has a very special uncle who has a very special job--working at a soup kitchen. This is a heart-warming story which describes the world of the homeless and the old, and the kindness of Uncle Willie and others who choose to work in the soup kitchen and help these people.

MY ALBUM, Eleanor Schick. Greenwillow Books, 1984.

This is a wonderful book about family and friends and other people who are important to a little girl who has a photo album with family pictures inside. Along with the pictures, the girl tells us about the people in her life and what makes them special. Every section dealing with individual characters is a short chapter. In the front of the book there is a table of contents with headings focusing on what a particular family member or friend likes to do; for example: dancing, jogging and sewing clothes. Any child who likes to talk about their family or themselves and share experiences would enjoy *MY ALBUM*.

THE AMAZING AMOS AND THE GREATEST COUCH ON EARTH, Susan Seligson and Howie Schneider. Joy Street Books.

This is a book for a child who appreciates action and the circus. The Amazing Amos becomes friends with a few clowns, elephants etc. He attends their practices and eventually becomes part of the main event. This book has fabulous illustrations.

A BIG, FAT, ENORMOUS LIE, Marjorie W. Sharmat. E.P. Dutton.

A little boy tells a lie which keeps on growing bigger and bigger! He also develops a guilty conscience! This book is about his feelings and the resolution.

MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS, John Steptoe, Scholastic, 1987.

This book has been awarded the Caldecott Medal. It's a beautifully illustrated African tale about two sisters, one of whom is angry and greedy, and the other who is kind-hearted. As in all folk-tales, goodness wins, but not without a fierce battle.

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD VERY BAD DAY, Judith Viorst. Macmillan Publishing Co., 1972

Alexander is having a terrible day. He doesn't get the snack he wants; his teacher doesn't like his picture; his sneakers don't fit. He wants to move to Australia where he imagines things will be better. This is a very hilarious book which chronicles the disappointments in every day life.

LUDELL, Brenda Wilkinson. Harper Collins Publishers, 1975.

Ludell is growing up in Waycross, Georgia where she spends her days playing and talking to her best friend, Ruthie Mae. She also has a new heart-throb, Willie. As the young girl grows up, she longs for experiences outside her small town. This is a great book with a positive role-model for African-American female children.

CHERRIES AND CHERRY PITS, Vera Williams. William Morrow & Co., 1986.

Bidemmi loves to draw and so she creates a life of people--all sizes, shapes and ethnic varieties, all of whom get along. In the end there are cherry pits which start to grow until, "There is a forest of cherry trees right on our block."

SPECIAL TOPICS

EVERETT ANDERSON'S GOOD-BYE, Lucille Clifton. Reading Rainbow

The story is about a boy, Everett, and how he deals with the stages of grief, after the death of his father.

Everett experiences denial, anger, depression, and finally acceptance. He realizes that love does not stop death.... it continues it!